

A
DIVINE DISCOVERY
OF
SINCERITY.

According to its proper and
peculiar nature : very profita-
ble for all sorts of persons
to peruse.

First Preached, and now Published,
for the good of Gods Church in generall.

By *Nicholas Lockyer*, Master of Arts.

*Pfal. 78. 37. For their heart was not right with him ; neither
were they stedfast in his covenant.*

*Pfal. 119. 80. Let my heart be sound in thy Statutes, that I be
not ashamed.*



LONDON,
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A
DIVINE DISCOVERY

SINGULARITY

According to the prophecies

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TO THE
VERTVOVS LADY
BRIDGET LYDDELL,

My much honoured Aunt:
Grace and peace be multiplied
by Iesus Christ.



Adam: Tis Gods command to Abraham, & in him to us, that we shoud walke before him, and be perfect. Absolute perfection God doth not there mean, but intentionall: which is, when we desire and endeavour with David, to have all our wayes conformed to all Gods Statutes. Intentionall perfection is no other but sincere walking; and what this is, this Tract now humbly presented to your Ladiship, wil plainly make known unto you. A sincere heart, is a heart after Gods owne heart; which of all Iewels which the Gentry and Nobility weare, is the most resplendent, in the breast and bosome to be worn. The

The Epistle Dedicatory.

richest Jeweller, Christ, proffers this pearle of great price, without mony, or mony worth, and the multitude slight it, as a low prised thing, not worth the seeking after; but your Ladiship hath otherwise learned Christ: Many things, Madam, may be convenient, but one is necessary, to wit, a sincere heart. The acquiring of this, is the worke of our whole life: the setting forth of this, in its nature and lustre, is the worke of Christs Ministers; the least and unworthiest of all which, is your Nephew, which hath in this tract, done something to this effect; from which if your Ladiship shall reape an increase of good, to that sweet stocke you have, I shall humbly blesse God. To whose blessing, I commend your selfe and worthy Family, this worke, and the unworthy author,

Your much oblieged Nephew,

Nicholas Lockyer.

To

To the Christian Reader.



Christian Reader, two things should bee the principall matter of thy study ; Christ, and thine owne heart. The latter, to know thine owne misery ; the former, to know Gods rich mercy, and how thou mayst be made partaker of it. So deceitfull is the heart of man naturally, that *hetinks himselfe rich, and increased in goods,* and knowes not that he is *poore, and blind, miserable, wretched, and naked.* And untill this deceit and unsoundnesse be discovered, men will never seeke out for Christ, which is that *Gold tried in the fire,* which indeed makes poore man rich; and that *whiterayment,* *Iohn* speakes of, which indeed makes naked man comely, & covers al his deformity, from the al-seeing eye of him that is perfect purity. The true knowlege of thine own heart, this little Traſt will help thee to, by the blessing of God; if thou seriously peruse

To the Reader.

it, and humbly seeke to him, who is the searcher and discoverer of all hearts, to goe along with thee in the reading of it. Which when once thou hast gotten, thou wilt be capable of the saving knowledge of Christ, and restlesse till thou hast obtained it. And this when acquired, will resolve thy doubting, comfort thy mourning, and stablish thy staggering soule: 'twill give thee peace and joy unspeakable here, and bring thee to glory and joy incomprehensible hereafter. To which, the Lord bring thee, and me.

Nicholas Lockyer.

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THE

The first Sermon,

2 COR. I. 12.

For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to youwards.



O grace, how glorious soever in the eye of man, goes for good weight in the eye of God, without sincerity: The greatest man in the world, weighed in the Balance of the Sanctuary, without this, will be accounted too light for Heaven. 'Tis a very needfull subject then, that this Text plainly proffers to our consideration. And as excellent in it selfe, as needfull to us, is sincerity. 'Tis the precious extract of all graces; and to call this a grace is too little. 'Tis that which gives to every grace its true lustre in the eye of God; and to call any thing a grace in man, without this, is too much. 'Tis the glory of all graces as the Sun is the glory of all the Stars: tis the vitall blood of the soule: which that it may run in the veines of you all, unto your eternall hapinesse, have

I chosen this text to insist on: *For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, &c.*

No condition is truly joyous without, and no condition is truly dolorous with, sincerity. If a man be never so rich, never so honourable, yet if not withall sincere, there is no true joy in such a man: he laughs, but in the midst of laughter, his heart is of-times sad, and his conscience spoils his sport. On the other hand; if a man be never so poore, never so much oppressed, which is the deadliest, and the most opposite enemy to joy of all, yet if that man be sincere, his heart may be as full of joy, as it can hold, for all this; as you may see in these words read, *For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, &c.* Paul and Timothy have been sincere servants of Jesus Christ, for the good of his Church amongst the Gentiles, and in this they had transcendent comfort in the midst of all the miserie they met withall.

'Tis not misery, but sinne, that robs the soule of joy. Let a man labour to live sincerely, and then let men and devils doe what they can, or will, such a man shall never be bereft of joy: he shall have joy in poverty, joy in disgrace, he shall have joy in prison, as much as in liberty, and much more; so had Paul and Timothy, which made them thus bravely break out in the midst of misery. *For our rejoycing is this; the testimony of our Conscience*

science, that in simplicity & godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards.

These words are the Apostles divine narration of their happy condition in misery. And they containe two principall things, usefull for all men to be well acquainted withall: to wit, true joy, and the true ground of this desirable grace; which the Apostle here makes, sincerity, and that testimony which conscience gives thereof to the Soule. *For our rejoycing is this, what? why, the testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, that is, in integrity and uprightnesse, not with fleshly wisdom, that is, not with humane policy and eloquence, as men proudly depending upon our owne parts, and subtilly seeking our owne ends, in our preaching and living, but by the Grace of God,* *ἐν τῇ ἀπλότητι τοῦ Θεοῦ, but in the grace of God,* saith the originall: that is, in the strength and assistance of God, which is a speciall fruit of his grace and favour, *we have had our conversation in the world; that is, we have carried our selves in life and doctrine amongst all, and more abundantly to you-wards; ἐκαστοὶς ὅστις ὑμῶν, but especially amongst you,* saith the Originall.

Divine joy is set forth unto us in this Text, according to its proper subject, and according to its proper rise. The proper subject of divine joy, is the *righteous man*, as the Psalmist frequently notes: And this man is made the subject of Divine joy in my Text; *For [our] rejoycing, &c.* that is, we which are sincere: hypocrites have nothing to do with

with joy, its unsuitable to their spirits; deceitfull; that which will flee from them, and not stand by them, as this joy of the Apostles did, when trials come.

For our reason, boasting is this, so the word in the originall strictly taken, signifies. Divine boasting notes Divine joy in the conspicuous act thereof: It notes joy, as it hath strongly seized upon the heart within; and it notes joy, as it hath strongly seized upon the tongue, and face, and hands without: so that it is all one as if the Apostle had said, *The cause of our strong and open rejoicing is this.*

What? That they had made provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts of it? No, divine joy hath not such a Diabolicall rise: The proper rise of divine joy, is the testimony of a pure Conscience, concerning the uprightness of a mans conversation; and this was the rise of Pauls and Timothies joy, in affliction. *Their conscience bore witness with them, that in integrity and uprightness, not in flattery, policy, and subtilty, they had preached and lived amongst all men, as those that depended upon the strength and ayd of Christ in every thing, and not upon any abilities of their owne, though they were indowed with greater humane gifts then any the false Apostles had. Thus they carried them selves in a plain, downright, faithfull way, where ever they came to publish the Gospel of Christ, but especially amongst the Corinthians. To other Churches Paul used a more insinuating way of preaching; but to this Church of the Corinthians, all plainnesse & homelinessse; sparing no expressions, that might fully*
set

set forth their wicked wayes, and throughly awaken their drowfie consciences, as hereafter in due place (God willing) I shall shew unto you. The Church of the *Corinthians*, of all the Churches which *Paul* or other of the Apostles had planted, was most loose every way; and therefore *Paul* did not content himselfe with hints and overtures; and wrap up bitter Pills, in sugred glib-go-down words; but with all godly boldnesse and plainnesse, beyond what he did to other Churches, hee reprov'd them for; and upbraided them with their wickednesse; which is that he would have us apprehend, in this last clause of my Text. *But specially amongst you.*

Severall propositions are to be noted in this verse thus opened: as first this, *That in simplicity and godly sincerity, we ought to have our conversation in this world.* This truth is plainly intimated by the Apostle; for he rejoyced that he had so ordered his conversation as Christ required; not flattering and fawning, with fleshly wisdom in his preaching, to looth men in their sinnes, and to bring about his owne ends, as false apostles did; but faithfully reprov'g every vice, sparing no plainenesse of speech, to such as otherwise would not be brought to see and bewaile their sinnes. Whether this way of preaching were pleasing or displeasing to the world; & whether it brought honour or disgrace to himselfe from the world, hee heeded not whilst he knew't was suitable walking to the Will of God.

*Doctrine
deductio.*

Doct. 2.

A second proposition is this, *That conscience can give testimony, concerning the simplicity, or hypocrisie of a mans conversation.* This truth is also plainly intimated, in that the Apostle makes the testimony of his conscience concerning his Integrity, the ground of his joy. *For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, (which had been hypocriticall) but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, &c.*

Doct. 3.

A third proposition is this, *That consciousness to our selves, of the simplicity and sincerity of our conversation, will yeeld us joy in the midst of troubles.* This truth is also intimated by the Apostle; for in the midst of all his troubles and miseries, he rejoyced in this, that his conscience could beare witnesse with him, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, he had ordered his conversation in this world.

Doct. 4.

A fourth and last point observable is this, *That there be speciall times and occasions for the declaration of sincerity, which ought to be observed, and answerably to declare and shew our selves in our places.* This truth is also plainly set forth unto us in the Text; for Paul and Timothy thus carried themselves in their places toward the Church of Corinth which became very openly and grossely wicked, *σεωπορευς ης ουκ εμας, but specially amongst you.* They had declared sinceritie and uprightnes in their ministry, amongst other Churches by a faithfull reprovng of them, as occasion required, but no Church so scandalously carried themselves as this Church, and therefore
this

this Church needed, above all others, to be more thoroughly dealt withall; which the Apostles, as sincere men considered, and answerably carried themselves.

I begin with the first of these, to wit, *That in simplicity and godly sincerity we ought to have our conversation in this world.* Paul could not justly have joyed in the simplicity and sincerity of his conversation, had not his conscience told him, that so to walke, was to walke as Christ had commanded him. Christs charge to his Apostles (when he sent them forth) was, that they should bee *integers ac aduersi, simple as doves*: that they should teach men to observe all things whatsoever he commanded them: now Pauls conscience and *Timothies* both bore witness with them, that thus they had walked in their places, and this made them to rejoyce in the midst of all the hardship they underwent. As they had this charge in particular, so they had this charge in general, with all the seed of *Abraham*, in these words, *Walk before me, and be thou perfect*: that is, sincere, *Gen. 17* 1. So that they had broken a double bond, had they not simply and sincerely ordered their conversation.

Simplicity] is a terme which sometimes notes folly. *How long ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and fools hate knowledge?* *Prov 1. 22.* In my Text, this terme is opposed to double mindednesse, and such men have usually more wit then they use well; and signifies an unity and identity between the heart and tongue; what the tongue sayes, the heart really intends: and so taken,

Doct. 1.

Mat. 10.

16.

Mat. 28.

20.

it sounds the same with sincerity, and therefore coupled together here by the Apostle, as *Synonyma's*, *contermini*, words of the same signification.

Sincerity is either *Morall*, or *Theologicall*. Morall sincerity, I call such a qualification of spirit, as leads a man to doe to others as he would be done to himselfe. A rectitude of spirit in relation to men. Such a sincere man ('tis probable) was *Abimelech* King of *Gerar*: He tooke *Abrahams* wife unto him, she being very beautiful, but this hee would not have done, had hee knowne her to have beene *Abrahams* wife; for *Abraham* had told him, that she was his sister; and therefore *Gad* bore witness with *Abimelech* concerning his integrity. *In the integrity of my heart, and innocency of my hands have I done this*, said *Abimelech*; and God said unto him, *Yea I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart*, *Gen. 20.6*. Such a sincere man was that young man which came to our Saviour, and told him, that he had kept *all the Commandments from his youth*. He gave to every man his due, and lived orderly among his neighbours, and therefore he judged himselfe as good as needed to be.

Morall sincerity, is close hypocrisie. Morall sincerity is like some counterfeit pearls, which make a faire shew to looke upon, but deceive both buyer and beholder. Multitudes thinke that because their spirits are so over-ruled by God, that they do no injury to man, that therefore they are indowed with *godly sincerity*, *εὐσυνείδητος*, *θεῖα*, *the*

the sincerity of God, as the originall here calls it. The truth is, Morall sincerity, is the sincerity of God too; for 'tis his restraining corrupt man, which otherwise would bee as prophane towards man outwardly, as he is towards God inwardly. *I withheld thee from sinning against me,* said God to *Abimelech*, Gen. 20. 6. A morall sincere man, is but an out-side holy man, but observes it not; and therefore (I thinke) called by some, A close hypocrite. But this is not that sincerity of God, which my Text speaks of,

Godly sincerity, or the sincerity of God which my Text speaks of, is a speciall worke of God upon the soule of man, making him laborious, to walke according to Gods will in all things, that God may have all the glory due to his name.

First, I say, that godly sincerity is a speciall worke of God upon the soule, &c. This Genus, the Apostle confirms in my Text, calling sincerity *ἀληθινὴ Θεία*, the sincerity of God. That is, that sincerity which is after a speciall manner wrought of God in the heart of man. So likewise elsewhere the Apostle solemnly prays for sincerity, in the behalfe of the *Philippians*; which plainly shewes, that sincerity is not *Quid proveniens à natura*, a thing growing naturally in man. And this I pray (saith the Apostle) that your love may abound, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere, and without offence unto the day of Christ, Phil. 1 9, 10.

The heart of man naturally is deceitfull, not sincere; desperately wicked, not truly good; more opposite to sincerity then to any thing;

Genus in
definitione

As things corrupted carry a greater dissimilitude to what they were, then to any things else which they never were. The Devill is more opposite to the goodnesse of an Angell which once hee had, then to any lower good, which he never formally had ; which is a torment that lies upon him, as a part of his judgement. *God made man upright* : that is, for qualification suitable to his owne will ; apt and able to walke in all holy waies blamelesse. Man voluntarily losing this, as the Devill did that, through pride, is with the Devill, more dislike to himselfe, then to any thing below himselfe, he is more like a Lion, a Leopard, a Tyger, a Beare, a wolfe, a Serpent, a Toade, a Stocke, a Stone, then man in innocency ; and more violently opposite to uprightness and justice naturally, then any creature below him is : and therefore is the heart of man naturally said to bee deceitfull [*above all things* and desperately wicked [*beyond knowledge*] *Ier. 17.9.* which is enough to demonstrate, that godly sincerity cannot be *a natura* ; and if not of nature, then grace. There is no faculty in this disjunctive argument.

*Cumulus
accidentium,
in definitione.*

Pro. 10. 6

Making a man laborious &c. that is, constantly laborious, willingly laborious, and laborious according to all his strength. First, sincerity is such a speciall worke of God upon the soule, that it makes a man *laborious* to doe the Will of God. *Solomon* confirms this where he saith, *That the labour of the righteous rendereth to life* : that is, to a holy and happy life. A sincere man is laborious to lead a holy life, to order

der all his conversation, according to the holy rule of Gods Word. That thus this clause is to be interpreted, I collect from the following clause, which by way of *Antithesis*, the wise man delivers. *The fruit of the wicked to sin.* The whole proverbe but together, hath the force of a comparison in it. As the labour of the wicked tends to sin; so the labour of the righteous tends to holinesse, and so consequently to happinesse. Sinceritie hath more in it then an applauding of holinesse: *Thou art more righteous then I: Thy going in and out before mee in the host is good.* Sinceritie hath more in it then a lazic wishing for holinesse. *O that I might die the death of the righteous, and that my last end might be like his!* Sinceritie is such a speciall worke of God upon the soule, that it sets a man a labouring for holinesse: *Wherefore wee labour,* that is, wee which are sincere *that whether present or absent, wee may be accepted of him,* 2 Cor. 5.9. that is, that wee may live holily, and die happily; whereas all other men labour after vanities, and so consequently their labours tend to sin, and so to death, as *Solomon* saith.

Sincerity is such a speciall worke of God upon the soule, that it makes a man see a transcendent worth in the will of God, and worth begets love, as the Sunne draws forth the spring; and love begets labour, to attaine the thing beloved. *Thy testimonies are wonderfull: therefore doth my soule keep them,* Psal. 119. 129. *Thy testimonies are wonderfull: that is, wonderfull righteous, just, and equal; and wonderfull sweet, sweeter*

then the honey, or the hony-combe : *therefore doth my soule keep them.* That is, therefore doth my soule labour to keep them. As if he had said, I see such a transcendent purity and taste, such a transcendent sweetnes in the testimonies of God, that my soule cannot chuse, but labour to walk in them.

Sincerity makes a man [*laborious*] to doe the Will of God, you see : that is, it makes a man *constantly, willingly,* and according to *all his strength*, industrious. That sincerity is such a speciall worke of God upon the soule, that makes a man [*constantly*] laborious to doe the will of God, *Paul* in whom sincerity was, confirms. *And herein doe I exercise my selfe, to have [alwaies] a conscience void of offence, towards God and towards man. Act. 24. 16.* *Pauls* industry was, to obey the will of God to day, and the like next day, and so he continued laborious every day, that he might have [*alwaies*] a conscience void of offence towards God and man. *The high way of the upright is to depart from evill, saith Solomon, Prov. 16. v. 17* that is, this is their daily soul-labour, the continuall road in which they travell, to get rid of sin, and to depart from that more and more. An hypocrite stumbles into this path of piety now and then, but this is not his high way, his usuall and daily road ; he quickly gets out of it again : to this unconstant cloud (I conceive) *Solomon* opposeth the upright man, in the place forecited, who makes it a beaten highway ; hee is so constant in his endeavours to doe good, and to depart from evill. *I have enclined my heart to performe thy statutes [alway] even*

unto the end.] Psa. 119. 112. Sincerity, is such a speciall worke of God upon the soule, that it inclines the heart to labour alwaies, to obey the will of God, which naturally is quickly weary of well doing. As the touch of a Loadstone, makes the needle to have constant and restlesse inclination to the North: so godly sincerity, which I may call Gods secret touch of the heart, it makes the soule of a man have a constant & restlesse inclination, to walke in Gods waies; and his constant inclination makes him constantly laborious, to doe according to his daily desire. Sincerity is such a speciall worke of God upon the soule, that it makes a man to set God [alwaies] before him, and to doe all things daily as in his presence. I have set the Lord [alwaies] before me saith David, Psalm 16. 8. For we are not as many, which corrupt the Word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God [speake we in Christ, 2. Cor. 2. 17. This is the genuine nature of sincerity, to make a man to set God [alwaies] before his eyes, and to doe things, as beholding him that is invisible.

Sincerity is such a speciall worke of God upon the soule, that it makes a man so constant in his endeavours to doe the will of God, that no opposition can make him to cease this labour. *The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from thy Law, Psa. 119. 51. Proud wretches scoff'd at holy waies, and Davids holy endeavours to walke in them: nay, they did this vehemently; and yet David (being sincere) held on his holy course still. Nay, elsewhere he tels us, that they had almost consumed him on earth, such was their malice*

Psa. 119.
83.

malice against him, *and yet he forsooke not his holy industry to obey Gods precepts, Psa. 119. 87.* Neither persecution of tongue nor hand, though never so vehement, can make a man, in whose heart godly sincerity is, to cease his industry to obey God, and walke in his waies. Hang him up as a *battle in the smoake*, and yet he will not forget this worke he is about, to wit, to obey Gods statutes. Strong trials may make a sincere heart give backe for a time, so farre may they prevaile upon the remaining unsoundnesse that is in the heart of man naturally, when at best; but they never prevaile, to make a sincere heart give off his labour to obey God.

That sincerity is such a speciall worke of God upon the soule, as makes a man *willingly laborious* to doe the will of God, is hinted to us by that expression of the Prophet, *Isai 1. 19. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the Land.* Sincere men are such as shall eat the good of that holy Land, which *Canaan* typified. So that this being laid downe, as an undeniable conclusion; we see that sincerity is such a speciall worke of God upon the soule, as toucheth the will, and to makes a man not onely obedient, but willing and *obedient*, without which there is no eating, that is, enjoying of that holy Land which *Canaan* typified. 'Twas that which God did much looke at, and stand upon, under the old covenant, that in all their sacrificall services (which were of cost and charge) they should be willing and chearefull, or else God would not account their obedience sincere: and therefore saith *David* an upright man, and

and that God and all his people might see his uprightness, in this chargeable way of serving God, *I will [freely] sacrifice unto thee I will praise thy Name, O Lord, for it is good. I will freely sacrifice: that is, willingly, chearefully, bountifully, &c.* If willingnesse were so much lookt at, in their chargeable services under the old covenant, as a symptome of sincerity, much more doubtlesse doth God looke at it now, in his services of the new covenant, which are without expence; and answerably doubtlesse it is with sincere men for the generall, under the Gospell: to wit, more willing and chearfull in their services to God, then they under the Law were.

A sincere man doth not labour to serve God, of constraint, and by compulsion, as some servants and all beasts serve us: but of a ready minde, as one that hath chosen this way of life above all others, to walk in: *I have chosen the way of truth; thy judgements have I layd before me, Psal. 119. 30.* Sincerity is such a speciall worke of God upon the soule, that it makes a man see a greater beauty in Gods waies, then in any waies besides; and to taste a greater sweetnesse in these waies, then in any waies: and hence the soule is raised voluntarily and freely, to choose these waies to walke in, before all others. Sincerity is such a speciall work of God upon the soule, that it makes a man see the word of God to be the straightest and truest rule of all others, to walke by; and therefore voluntarily chooseth this, before others, to lay before him as a rule to walke by, *I have chosen the way [of truth] thy judgements have I layd before me.*

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That sincerity is such a speciall Worke of God upon the soule, as makes a man laborious [according to all his strength] to doe the will of God, we may lively see by some notable expressions of Paul. *I presse towards the marke, for the paice of the high Calling, of God, in Christ Jesus, Phil. 3. 14.* *διὸ καὶ ἐκινῶμαι, I pursue, I hunt*, saith the original. Pursuing and hunting are actions wherein the creature puts forth all his strength, to get what they desire. Sincerity sets a man to hit the white; and there must be all possible care in leveling, to doe this. Sincerity sets the soule to win the prize; (*for the price of the high calling*) now a man that would win the prize, must not runne lazily, but he must *nervis cunctis labore*, runne with all his strength. So you have another notable expression, *Phil. 3. 13.* *Forgetting those things which are behind, and [reaching forth] unto those things which are before, incontinently extending, contending, stretching forth, reaching forth*; which are all termes (you know) which note the whole strength put forth, to acquire a thing. Sincerity is such a spirituall worke of God upon the soule, as makes a man to set before him no other rule, but perfection, to walke by; and then it makes a man labour with all his strength, to walke exactly according to this rule; *εἰ μὴ, If by any meanes he may attaine unto the resurrection of the dead.* That is, to doe the will of God on earth as men risen from the dead, and living with Christ in Heaven, doe. Hitherto tend also those expressions in Scripture, of serving God with the [whole heart] *with my whole heart have I sought thee*

thee, O let me not wander from thy Commandments, Ps. 119. 10. I labour with all my strength to walke in thy waies, and when I put forth mine owne strength to the uttermost, then I deny all in my selfe, and wholly depend upon thy strength, to be made victorious, against the many temptations I meet withall; and whilst through thine ayd, I go in the direct way, to obtaine grace, and victory against corruptions, let me not O Lord be frustrated, and so lie open still, to be drawne aside from thy Commandements.

Godly sincerity makes a man observe the divine rule, in labouring to doe the will of God. Now the divine rule in this point, is, that we should labour with *all our strength, thou hast commanded us to keepe thy precepts [diligently]* Psal. 119. 4. *Thou hast commanded us to [keepe]* that is, thou hast commanded us to labour to keepe: but how to labour? lazily? no: *diligently.* *וְאֵלֶּיךָ וַלְּבָבְךָ וַלְּבָרִיתְךָ וַלְּבָרִיתְךָ וַלְּבָרִיתְךָ* *valde, very much, earnestly, vehemently,* saith the originall; That is, with all our strength. Now sincerity is such a speciall worke of God upon the soule, that it makes a man put this precept before him, in all his labourings to do the Will of God: and so he labours very much, *earnestly, vehemently,* that is, with all his strength, to doe the will of God.

That sincerity makes a man laborious with all his might [*to doe all Gods Will*] the Scripture abundantly proveth. God himselfe describing a sincere man to the Divell, confirmeth this. *And the Lord said to Satan, hast thou not considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect*

perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evill? That is, one that eyeth all my will, and escheweth all that is contrary thereunto. That thus these words are to be interpreted, is manifested by *Jobs* owne language, when he would maintaine his sincerity to God, the searcher of all hearts. *Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity.* Why? what is thy integrity *Iob*, upon which thou dost so much stand? why 'tis this: I have laboured to obey all Gods will. *If my steps have turned out of the way, and my heart walked after mine eyes, & if [any blot] hath cleaved to my hand, &c.* *Iob. 31.* If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hastned to deceit; and so he goes on largely, driving things to this issue, that if he had not been laborious, to walke according to all Gods will, he would yeeld to what his adversaries charged him with, to wit, that his heart was not sincere. Solikewise the Lord explaines himselfe, in describing *Dauids* integrity to *Solomon*. *And if thou walke before me as David thy Father, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to doe according to [all] that I have commanded thee,* *1 Kings. 9. 4.* By this we plainly see, that sincerity sets a man to do all that God enjoynes. Christ therefore in the new Testament, describing sincerity to the young man that thought himselfe as upright (doublelesse) as any, *All these things have I kept from my youth: what lack I yet?* Jesus said unto him, *If thou wilt be perfect: that is, if thou wilt be sincere and upright indeed, in the eye of God who is a searcher of the heart, goe and sell all thou hast, and give to*
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the poore, and come and follow me: Part with every lust, with covetousnesse thy darling sinne, as well as with others, to which thy nature is not so apt, and resigne up thy heart, to obey me in all things, so shalt thou be happy here and hereafter: sincerity makes a man set all Gods will before him, as a rule to walke by, and to obey God in that part of his will that most opposeth that sin to which he is most inclined, as well as any other. *For all his judgements were before me; and I did not put away his statutes from me, I was upright before him, and kept my self from [mine iniquity]* Pla. 18.22. 23. *I did not put away his statutes from me, &c.* An unsound soule will not take notice of such a precept as opposeth his speciall sinne: such a precept must goe for a blanke, which the soule throws by, and will not thinke of, but as conscience now and then puts him in minde of it, whether he will or no. But 'tis not so with a man in whom sincerity is: that precept which doth most oppose that sinne, to which he is most inclined, he labours to obey as well as any other. *I was upright before thee, and I kept my selfe from [mine iniquity]* An unsound soule sets so many of Gods Statutes before him, as rules to walke by, as suits with himselfe and the times, and no more. Such precepts as oppose his speciall corruptions, or displease the times, and so expose him to suffering, these he balkes and puts away, as *David* here saith, and calls them as the rotten Scribes and Pharisees, were wont to doe, *Least Commandements*, small things not to be regarded: which rottennesse Christ tooke up roundly in those ironicall words, *Who-*
soever

soever shall breake one of these least Commandments, shall be called the least in the Kingdom of God. Godly sincerity makes no difference of greatest and least, between the precepts of God, but sets all before a man as a rule to walke by, and makes the soul laborious to observe all. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy Commandments, Psalm. 119. 6.

That God may have all the glory due to his Name]
That sincerity makes a man to aime at the glory of God, and not at his owne glory, is manifest by that expression the Apostle useth in my Text, *not with fleshly wisdom*, that is, not declaring our owne humane parts and gifts, to advance our owne honour and esteeme, but as the Spirit gave us utterance, so we speak in all plainenesse and sincerenesse, that so poore ignorant soules might be edified, and God glorified. Christ describing an upright man to the unsound Scribes and Pharises, describes him (I remember) by this property, *That he seeketh not his own glory, but his glory that sent him. He that speaketh of himselfe seeketh his own glory, but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is [true] and no unrighteousnesse in him, Ioh. 7. 18.* Christ that had no guile found in his lips, vindicated his sincerity still by this, that he sought not his owne glory in any thing he did, but the glory of him that sent him: and that man which doth thus, *he is true, and there is no unrighteousnesse in him.* That is, he is sincere, and no hypocrite as the world may falsely judge, As Aristotle said of a friend, that he is, *alter ego, Another I. or another selfe*: so may I say of a Christian, that he is

is *alter Christus*, another Christ: *as he is, so are we in this World*, saith Saint *John*. As he aimed in all things at the glory of his father; so a sincere man aims in eating, in drinking, or whatsoever he does, at the glory of God: *God forbid* (saith Saint *Paul*) *that I should glory in any thing but in Christ*. Sincerity is such a speciall work of God upon the soule, that it makes a man give Christ all the glory, of all the good he does, and of all the good he has, and hopes for, and to appropriate nothing to himselfe but shame; yet *am I nothing*, saith *Paul*: Nothing but a sinner; nay, of all sinners the chiefe.

An upright man, is a man after *GODS* owne heart: now looke what GOD most looks for, that an upright man lookes most at, and labours most of all to helpe God unto. Now GOD looks at his owne Honour and Glory in every thing, wherein he hath to doe with the creature, above any thing. He made all things for his Glory; and upholds all things for his glory. There should never have beene a stone laid in the glorious Fabricke of this World, had it not beene for Gods glory: nor not a stone should have beene left upon a stone, long ere this, but the whole World should have beene turned into his first nothing, were it not for Gods glory. This a sincere man eyes, and answerably applies himselfe to GOD in all hee does; as an obedient Wife applies her selfe to that sweet carriage, that she knowes will most delight her Husband. When *Isaac* had discovered to *Esau*, that *Yerison* was the most savoury

meat, which his soule desired, *Eſau* applied himſelfe to his father, and goes a hunting after it, that he might bring to his father what he moſt loved, and ſo obtain his fathers bleſſing. Now God hath declared that his honour and glory is that ſavoury meat which his ſoule of all things moſt loves, and therefore all that are ſincere children of God, they doe hunt and plot for this in all their wayes, that they may bring God that ſavoury meat, which his ſoule moſt loves.

The deſcription of ſincerity being thus opened, I am in the next place to ſhew unto you the grounds of this point; why we ought thus ſimply and ſincerely to have our converſation in this World. The grounds are theſe Foure: Firſt, becauſe God commands it. Secondly, becauſe God delights in it. Thirdly, becauſe God hath appointed this and no other way unto all good. Laſtly, becauſe the World which lies in wickedneſſe, may be left without excuſe. Firſt, we ought in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity to have our converſation in the world, becauſe God commands it. *I am the almighty God, walke before me, and be thou perfect;* that is, *entire, ſincere, Gen. 17.1.* This Commandement God gave to *Abraham*, and in him to all us. This commandement is not grievous; a Commandement that hath any in juſtice in it, that any ſhould complain or except againſt it, and therefore ought to be obeyed. For God made man, and can unmake him againe at his pleaſure; and therefore may juſtly ſerve himſelfe of him, and appoint him what rules he pleaſeth to walk by. *I am God almighty] walk before me, and be ſincere.* I
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by my Almighty power made thee of nothing, and can quickly by this Almighty power, turn thee into worse then nothing: therefore walke thus and thus, as I command thee.

God did more by his Almighty power, then barely make man: God by his Almighty power made man upright: that is, not as uprightness notes sincerity, but as uprightness notes perfection. And therefore God might justly command us, (if he would) to walke perfectly, as Angels and Saints in Heaven doe. This commandement therefore is not grievous, but full of mercy and moderation, that he commands us onely to walke before him, and be upright, as uprightness notes sincerity. Therefore seeing 'tis a commandement full of justice and mercy both, it ought to be obeyed; and so consequently every one of us ought in simplicity and godly sincerity, to have our conversation in this world,

Secondly, as God commands us to be sincere, so he *delights* in it; and therefore we ought in simplicity and godly sincerity, to have our conversation in this World. *They that are of a froward heart, are an abomination to the Lord; but such as are upright in their way, are his delight, Prov. 11. 20.* Kings, as they have Officers for necessity, so they have favorites, persons of honour, for communion and delight. Now the King of Kings would have no fit persons of honour for communion and delight in this world, were there no upright men in it: and therefore we ought in simplicity and godly sincerity, to have our conversation in this world. God would live solitary and alone in this world,

without any pleasure or delight in this World, were there no upright men, nor uprightnesse in it: for God hath no pleasure in wickednesse nor wicked men. *Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickednesse, Psalm. 5. 4.* The God of this World, that rules in the children of disobedience, is a God that hath pleasure in wickednesse; but the God of all the World, is not such a God; he hath pleasure onely in uprightnesse. *I know also my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightnesse, 1 Cor. 13. 17.* And therefore we ought to walke in uprightnesse, or else we shall deprive the King of Kings of his pleasure.

Thirdly, we ought in simplicity and godly sincerity to have our conuersation in this world, because God hath appointed this and no other way to all good. *For the Lord God is a Sunne and a Shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly, Psalm. 84. 11.* If we would have the light of Gods smiling countenance to shine upon our soules, which is ten thousand times more glorious, and reviving then the Sunne, we must walk uprightly; for the Lord God is a Sunne to such, and none else. *God is angry with the wicked every day,* saith the Prophet: and being angry with them every day, he cannot smile upon their soules, as the Sunne doth upon all creatures, but frowne and knit the browes against them. God dwels as a conuincer and reuoler, and not as a comforter, in the hearts of hypocrites. God feeds mens soules with gall and wormwood, with bitters, not with sweets;

sweets; with a certaine fearefull looking for of judgement and fierie Indignation, which have not their conversation in simplicity & godly sincerity, in this world. A Hell and not a Heaven, shall men that walke not uprightly, have within their owne hearts.

If we would have protection, we must walke uprightly: for the Lord God is a *Shield* onely to such. *He that walketh righteously and speaketh uprightly, his place of defence shall be the munitions of Rocks, Isa. 33. 15.* God is a consuming fire, and not a defence unto the hypocrite. In a word, if a man would have grace or glory, or any good thing else that he can name, he must walke in this way to obtaine it, to wit, *in simplicity and godly sincerity*: for in no other way hath God engaged himselfe, to bestow any good upon man, but all evill. The Israelites going out on the Sabbath day to finde Manna, found nothing but a curse; and the reason, because out of Gods way. God will distribute blessings in his owne way: if we decline this way, God will inflict curses, and not blessings. Now upright walking is that way in which God hath promised to bestow all good, and none else: and therefore we ought thus to walk. 'Tis fit we should come to God, and not God to us; 'tis fit that unholy man should conforme to a holy God; and not a holy God to unholy man.

Finally, we ought *in simplicity and godly sincerity, to have our conversation in the World*; that to the world which lies in wickednesse, may be left without excuse, both in regard of their wickednesse towards God, and his children. Wicked

men complain of Christ, that he is a hard master, looking to reap where he did not sow; that this and that precept is a hard saying, none can obey it. And others complaine that the world is full of occasions and provocations, that 'tis impossible to walke uprightly. Others, that times are so hard and dead, that they cannot live of their callings, if they should deale justly, and walke uprightly. Now Christ will stop the mouths of all these at the great day, by setting before them those that have lived, in the same ages of the world, in the same employments in the world, under the same government of Christ in the world, and yet have kept themselves unspotted of the world, and have in simplicity and godly sincerity had their conversation in the world: and then shall Christ *be cleare when he judges*, and lyers mouths shall be stoppt, and be like the man that wanted a wedding garment. And therefore we ought in simplicity and godly sincerity to have our conversation in the world, every one in his place, that so Christ may doe this service by us against the wicked, at the great day.

Again, that wicked men may be left without excuse, as in regard of their wickednesse toward God, so in regard of their wickednesse toward Gods children. Now the wicked persecute the godly with tongue and hand, and pretend just ground for their practice; that the godly are, as he falsly said of the Prophet, troublers of *Israel*, enemies to Church and state. But at the great day, the searcher of all hearts will lay open all things according to truth; and make it plainly appeare

to men and Angels, that they had their conversation in this world, in simplicity and Godly sincerity, and so guiltlesse of all that the wicked accused them of, and punish them for; and then will Christ be cleare when he judges these wretches, for condemning the generation of the iust. Wherefore we ought to walk sincerely and blamelessly in this world, that so the wicked may have no plea for their wicked proceedings against us, or against the righteous proceedings of Christ against them.

Ought we in simplicity and godly sincerity, to have our conversation in the World? Why, then let us examine our selves, and see whether we thus walke. Are ye laborious? that is, constantly laborious, willingly laborious; laborious according to all your strength to doe all Gods Will, that he may have all the glory due to his name? Looke backe, and call to mind, how this description of sincerity was opened, and lay open your hearts and lives by it, and see whether they agree or not. Are yee laborious to doe the Will of God? Or doe yee not the worke of the Lord negligently? and so stand lyable to that dreadfull curse denounced by Ieremie? Doe yee not rest in bodily exercises which profit nothing? 'Tis the leatt labour in the world, to bring the outward man to duties; the labour of labours is about the heart, to bring that to duties; are yee laborious about this? Are yee watchfull over your Spirits, and laborious about your inward man, that this in every thing, may goe along with the outward man to obey God? 'Twas that the Lord of old upbraided

Jer. 48. 10

his people withall, that they were laborious according to the outward man, to come to Church, and to be at all divine exercises, but they were carelesse respecting their hearts, which God most lookt at, and let this run loose after vanity. *And they come unto thee, as thy people commeth, and they sit before thee as thy people, and they heare thy words, but they will not doe them: for with their mouthes they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousnesse, Ezek. 33. 21.* God most looks at the heart, how that is entire to, or loose from himselfe. Are ye most laborious about that, which God most lookes at? or doe ye not least minde that which God looks at most? in this consists the power of godlines, to be laborious about the inward man to bring this to be obedient, to the Will of God (*My sonne give me thy heart.*) Neglect this, and thou wert as good sit still, as labour at all about thy outward man, to bring that to be holy: thy labour about outside holinesse, is to God as the cutting off of a dogs necke; and God will upbraid thy labour, as he did those hypocriticall Scribes and Pharisees, who *washed the outside of the Cup and platter.*

Possibly some of you may thinke, that you hold weight well enough by this: That you are *laborious* according to the outward man, and according to the inward man, to doe the will of God: but put in one weight more into the Scales and Balance of the Sanctuary, to wit, this; Are ye *constantly* laborious to doe the Will of God? Tell me which way the Scales turne now. Sincerity makes a man *constantly* laborious to doe the Will
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of God, as you have largely heard; do you thus labour? Or are ye not quickly weary in well-doing; so weary as to leave off the work? Thou art watchfull over thy spirit to day; but art thou not as carelesse about it to morrow? The godly are subject to wearisomnesse and *fainting in their mindes* (as the Apostle intimates) in their labouring about, and watching with an unruly heart; but they are never so weary, as to give over the work. *David* was wearied often with his *groanings*, they were so deep, and breathed out so many precious Spirits; but yet as fresh strength came, he kept on groaning still, under the heavy burthen of a bad heart, and never left labouring about his spirit to bring it to be more and more composed, entire, and one with God, as long as hee lived. But unsound Christians are quickly weary in labouring about their hearts, just in that sense which God is said to bee weary of repenting, *Ier. 15. 6. Thou hast forsaken me* (saith the Lord) *thou art gone backward; therefore will I stretch out my hand against thee, I am weary of repenting*; that is, I will repent no more: I will forbear the execution of my threatnings no longer. So rotten hearts are wearied with repenting, soul-searching, and soul-watching, that they will repent no more, nor maintain inward industry about their souls no more, but judge of it upon a little triall, as that which will shorten their lives, or at least, utterly end the felicity of their lives, and at last cry it downe, as an unnecessary and unreasonable service. Is it not thus with you?

Possibly yet some of you may think, that you
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hold weight well enough, by the balance of the Sanctuary. But put in one weight more, and tell me which way the scales turne then. Are ye *willingly and cheerfully laborious* to doe the will of God? Doe you finde any soule-sweetnesse, in your soule-labours? Or are they not as the dis-ease of the stone, strong tortures, without the least tang of sweetnesse? is it not as death unto thee to be searching, humbling, watching and observing thy spirit, a day? Dost thou not shunne and avoid occasions, as much as thou canst, that may make thee to looke in upon thy spirit, to check it in its vaine way, as that which is like the pricking of thy *right eye*? Dost thou not make frivolous excuses, and needlesse businesse, to put by *Davids* opportunities, of private commerce with God and thy owne soule? as one that findeth no pleasure nor profit, in this service of God? Dost thou not wish that prayers were over, Sermons over, the Lords day over, that thou mightest be selling Corne; and following thy secular employments, and carnall sports and delights, as those wherein thou findest more soul-content, then in any divine thing? *'Tis a joy to the just to doe judgement*, saith *Salomon*. 'Tis the sweetest pleasure in the world to an upright man to be in upright, holy waies, doing uprightly to God and man. Gods word, Gods ordinances, Gods people, Gods service in every part thereof, are all transcendently sweet to an upright soul: *Sweeter then honey*, that is, sweeter then the sweetest earthly content. And the more spirituall, divine duties and exercises are, the more pleasing and taking

king still, to an upright soule. Duties of most seriousnesse and strictnesse, are of most soul-sweetnesse to him. Is it thus with you?

Possibly yet some of you may think that you hold weight well enough, by this balance of the Sanctuary. But put in one graine more, and tell me whether thou be not found too light then? Are ye laborious *according to all your strength*, to doe the will of God? doe you *reach forth* and *presse forward*, as Saint Paul saith, that is, put out all your strength to obey the will of God? this in Scripture, where sincerity is pressed unto, is called a serving of God with *all our hearts*. You take a little paines to the obey will of God? but could you not take a great deale more if you listed? 'Twas the unsoundnesse of the Jewes, that when they could have brought Males and legitimate sacrifices, they brought (to save their purses) maimed and deformed sacrifices. And so 'twas the unsoundnesse of *Saul*, that he could have killed *Agag* and the fat of the cattell, as well as the rest of the Amalekites, if he would. And is it not your hypocrisie, that you could doe a great deale more to please God, then you doe, if you listed? doe not by and selfe ends make you pluck in your horns, and suspend your selves, parts and abilities from Gods service? Doth not the feare of the losse of your liberties, livings, lives and the like, make you speake lesse for God, and doe lesse for God, then he hath given you ability and opportunity to doe? Doe yee not put forth your parts in the service of God, in reference to the safety of your skin, and not in reference

rence to Gods command, which calls for all our might in his service?

If you tell me that you hold weight yet by the ballance of the sanctuary, why? put in yet one grain more, and tell me whether the scales do not stand without poising either way. Are yee laborious according to all your strength, *so doe all Gods will?* according to that holy rule, *Deut. 10.5. Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, so observe to doe [all these Commandements] which I command thee this day.* You doe with *Herod*, by means of powerfull preaching and sharp affliction, reforme *many things* peradventure, but do ye labour to reforme all things? To divorce your selves from your *Herodias*: To pull out right eyes, and to cut off right hands; To mortifie your *members which are upon Earth*; that is, the sins of your soules, which are as deare unto you as the members of your bodie? or doe ye not spare *Agag*, and the fat of your lusts? pleasing sins, and profitable sins? Doe you observe doctrine and discipline, matter and manner in the worship and service of God?

You pray, but doe yee pray *fervently*? You pray, but doe ye *watch and pray*? You heare the word of God, but doe ye *take heed how ye heare*? You receive the Sacrament, but doe ye *examine your selves, and so eat*? You goe to the house of God about holy duties, but doe ye *looke to your feet*, when you approach so neare unto God? You give to the poore, but doe you give *chearefully*? you give, but doe you give *liberally*? You know the Scripture calls for manner as well as mat-

matter : manner is all in all with God : And sincerity is such a speciall worke of God upon the soul, that it makes a man laborious to do every diviniting exactly, according to that divine manner which God in his word prescribes. 'Tis not thus with an hypocrite, he is led by customes; and makes it a matter of conscience not to swerve from these, how incongruous soever to the word of God; or else he is fearefully given over to a carelesse spirit, to doe divine things, as hits, he cares not how; any way, or no way, all is one. Or else, he is desperately pinned to his own will, being wiser in his owne eyes then ten men that give a reason. Thus and thus he will walke, say all the world what they will: is it not thus with you?

If you tell me, that yet you hold out weight by the ballance of the sanctuary, I am glad; yet possibly you may be one graine too light. Are ye laborious to doe all Gods will, *that God may have all the glory due to his name*? Doe ye not sacrifice to your owne nets, and take the glory to your selves of your labours, like *Herod*? When men applaud you, is not this to you, as the rubbing of a Parrat upon the head, very pleasing, and that which makes you hug your selves within your own thoughts? *Is not this great Babel which I have built*? Could such a thing have been done, if I had not done it? Or could any man have done it so well as I? Looke in upon your spirits before, but especially after divine duties, and see whether you doe not seeke your selves in them, more then the glory of Christ. Doe ye not give almes to be accounted liberall men, and that the

poore

poore may applaud you for good men, and good house-keepers? Doe yee not *blow a trumpet, when you give almes*? that is, so distribute your charity, as may be most advantagious to your owne repute in the world? Do ye not let your left hand know still what your right hand doth? are ye not damp't in your designes of charity and bounty, when 'tis to goe forth in such a way, as if it were *cast upon waters*, or into the bottom of a well, where no eye can see, nor no tongue speak of your good works, nor no likelihood of the least returne? Do ye not looke for much observance from such to whom you doe much? And repent of your kindnesse, when men doe not answer it in thankfullnesse? Doe ye eye Christs command, and out of love to him, give upon all just occasions as unto him? Are those that are religious tendred and succoured by you in their bonds and miseries, *as if you were bound with them*, according to the divine rule?

Doe ye not in prayer, more looke at words and expressions, then to your spirits? Doe yee not *pray in the market places*? That is, so pray that others may observe you, and blaze abroad that you are very devout persons? Are you not industrious to pray well (as you call it) in publicke, and carelesse and pifunctory, when you pray in private? Are ye not more constant a great deale, in the performance of publique, then in the performance of private prayers, where there is no observer nor applaude but God, which sees and heares in secret? Doe yee not after prayer hug your owne gifts, and admire your apt expressions, dexterity

dexterity of utterance; and thinke much, that you have no more thanks given you for your paines; and that those that joyned with you, were no more affected? Doe yee not pin your spirits to your owne acute studied formes, and prayers in print, *boasting of things made ready to your hand* (as the Apostle speaks) and scoffe at the *spirit of grace and supplication*? Zeck. 12.10.

Doe ye not preach your selves and not Christ; and more looke at words then matter; to please men, then please God? Doe ye labour to approve your selves to every mans conscience or to every mans fancie? Do ye not put plaine truths into obstruse termes, a new coat upon old divinity, and strive to soar in dry Metaphysicall strains, above your owne and others apprehensiu? Doe ye not *build hay and stubble* upon the true foundation? the opinions of Fathers and Schoolmen, and the tenents of proud time-servers, whom God hath given over to a *Spirit of delusion to believe lies, because they received not the truth in the love of it*. Doe ye aime at conviction, conversion, or ostentation in your preaching? Doth it not almost make you sicke like *Ahab* that your elaborate sermons in places of eminent note, have not yet brought you to a fat living? Doe ye not preach *Christ out of envy*, as the Apostle speakes, to bring about your wicked designs, and to vend your malicious spirits against the godly? Doe ye not wrest the word of Christ, to confirme your time-serving tenents, and to maintain your voluptuous loytering life? And if
so:

so : is this in simplicity and Godly sinceritie to have your conversation in the world ?

To you that by what hath beene said, see, that you are yet unsound at heart, that you doe not in simplicity and godly sinceritie order your conversation in this world. I have three things to say : Labour to be affected with your unsoundnesse : Then judge your selves, that you may never be judged of the Lord : And then beg the cure of your foule disease.

First, labour to be affected with your unsoundnesse. This is the killing mischiefe of hypocrisie, that it is hard and difficult, throughly to bee found out and truly to be bewailed. Hypocrisie is *vitium latens, vitium transfigurans, vitium adularans, & vitium obdurans* : a hidden, a transforming, a flattering and a hardning vice. 'Tis a hidden vice. *The heart is deceitfull and desperately wicked, who can [know it] (saith the Prophet) The spirit of a man may know the things of a man,* but deceit and guile, this lurks and skulks in such hidden corners of the heart, that the spirit of man does not know it. And hence it is, that multitudes think themselves very sincere which yet are very unsound. A man may discerne drunkennesse, swearing, and whoring in himselfe, and yet all this while, be utterly unable to see the hypocrisie of his spirit : and hence 'tis, that you shall have drunkards, swearers and whore-masters to confesse these vices, and yet plead for the goodnesse of their hearts and meanings too.

When the unsoundnesse of the heart is discovered by the word and Spirit of God, then hypocrisie

crisie becomes *vitium transfigurans*, a transforming vice. The heart strives now, to put faire glosses upon foule matters; to put a beautifull vizard upon the ugly face of sinne; and to appeare in the eye of a wakened Conscience, quite of another colour; or at least nothing so ugly as the Word of God would make it to be.

If this will not stop the mouth of complaining Conscience, then it becomes *vitium adulans*, a flattering vice. The heart tels conscience now, that it is true, things are bad, but God is very good: he is not *extreme to marke what is done amisse*; a thousand worse persons have found mercy, and are gone to Heaven, and therefore thou needst not so much trouble thy selte, O my soule. *He that beleeves makes not hast*; it is time enough yet; to amend all that is amisse, and to be as good as the best.

All this while that it is a *hidden vice*, a *transforming vice*, a *flattering vice*, 'tis a *hardening vice*. All the while hypocisie lyes hid, and after it is discovered; and shifts and flatters, it insensibly hardens; so that whilst *deceiving*, the soule is miserably deceived, and then becomes *past feeling*, Conscience being *seared with an hot iron*: that is, God utterly leaving conscience, to doe any office any longer for him, in checking such a shifting shuffling sinner in his sinfull way. And when this worke is done upon any soule, you may leave tolling and ring out; for he is dead and gone for ever.

Now because hypocrisie is of such a shuffling subtilie nature as this, 'tis very hard for a man to become truly sensible of it, and throughly affected with it: and therefore I exhort you which are convinced by what was formerly delivered, of your soundnesse, first to labour to be truly sensible of it, and deeply affected with it. 'Tis a vice, that of all vices, puts you into the furthest unlikenesse to God, and the neereft likeness to the Devill, It puts you into the furthest dissimilitude to God, of all vices: for God is *most upright* saith *Isaiah*. *Thou most upright* doest weigh the path of the just, *Isaiah*. 26. 7. God is *most upright*, and an hypocrite of all men least upright: and therefore, an hypocrite of all men, is least like God, and yet most like the Devill; of whom I may say, as the Lord of the Leviathan, *He is King*, saith God, *of all the children of pride*: So is the Devill King of all the children of hypocrisie. As 'tis said of God, that he is *most upright*; so it may be said of the Devill, that hee is most guilefull; an arch-hypocrite: and therefore guilefull persons are most like the Devill; and the more guilefull, the more like: and hence is *Elymas*, who was *full of all subtilty*, by way of eminency, called *The childe of the Devill* by Saint Paul, who knew well how aptly to stile hypocrites.

'Tis a vice that turnes a man into a Devill, and God into fury fiercer then the Devill: for the Devill is but Gods creature, and therefore though his fury bee unexpressible by us, yet it is finite in it selfe; but Gods fury against hypocrite,

crites is infinite ; and therefore you shall find him spending a whole Chapter, in breathing out woes against hypocrites ; and therefore hell as the most suitable place, and the greatest torments in Hell, as the most suitable thing to an infinite fury, is reserved as a peculiar portion for hypocrites. Were infinitenesse communicable, and by a infinite creature susceptible, no lesse then infinite fury should hypocrites burne in.

When thou hast by such considerations as these, brought thy spirit to be truly affected with thy unsoundnesse, then judge thy selfe for it, that thou mayst not bee judged of the Lord. Judge thy selfe as one most injurious to Christ and his glory, of all men. judge thy selfe as a Traitor to the King of Kings : as one that hast craftily conspired with the Devill and thine owne heart, to keepe out Christ from ruling and reigning in thee : as one that hast subtilly betrayed the honour of God, in every action thou hast performed, seeking thy selfe under pretence of seeking him. Judge thy selfe as a cheater, that hast beene cunning to deceive the godly, and thine owne poore soule. Judge thy selfe as a selfe-soule-murtherer, that hast craftily baffled thine owne Conscience, that Gods Word might not convert and turne thee from thine ungodly course, and so save thy precious soule. Judge thy selfe as a *Judas*, that kissest Christ, bowest and cringest to Christ, and yet betrayest and crucifiest Christ. In a word, Judge thy selfe as a right hand of the Devill, by which hee hath done a great deale of mischief. Judge thy selfe as a

capitall offender, as a sinner of all sinners the chiefe; and then beg pardon.

And intreate God to cure the foule disease of thy heart. Tell him how long this disease hath been upon thee; and what a loathsome creature it hath made thee; and what a prime vitall part it is fastened upon; and how neere perishing thou art; and how it is past the cure of all other physicians and Surgeons; and that there is but one way with thee speedily, if thou hast not remedie forthwith from him; and that thou hast nothing of thine owne, to satisfie him for the cure of it: but hast a friend, Christ, that will pay all. Remember this, to begge him, who *fashioneth all mens hearts alike*, to mend thy bad heart with a new one, according to his promise. Only a new heart is an upright heart; and this God hath promised to give, and this thou must urge, and believe, and wait: and this way shalt thou be healed, helped, and saved.

To you which upon examination finde, that you *doe in simplicity and godly sincerity, order your conversation in this world*, I have onely this to say, you doe no more then you ought, and therefore there is no place for boaiting. 'Tis our beauty in Gods eye, to be vile in our owne eyes, what ever our parts and endeavours be. Thy uprightnesse of integrity, comes farre short of that uprightnesse of perfection, in which thou wast created: and therefore when thou hast done all that thou canst, yet *say that thou art an unprofitable servant*; a man that comes far short of what thou shouldst be, and of what once thou wast.

But

But that which I would rather stand on a little, is this ; Thou that walkest sincerely, dost no more then thou oughtest, and therefore goe on. The Apostles exhortation to the *Hebrewes*, shall be mine to you : *Looke diligently lest any man faile of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled Heb. 12.*

15. We have that within us, and that without us, which will corrupt our simplicity, and turne us aside from our sincere conversation, if we doe not watch over our selves. Where simplicity is, hypocrisie is not wholly extirpated; some remainders of this foule evill are in the best heart ; and these roots of bitterness, if you bee not still labouring to grub up, they will quickly overgrow sincerity, and all good in the heart.

And as we have that within us, which will quickly seduce us from that simplicity which is in Christ; so we have that without us too, which will doe the like, if we be not very watchfull, to wit, the Devill and his children. The Devill is an arch-Apostate himselfe, and he labours might and main, to make all the sonnes of men, to fall from grace and goodneile as he hath done ; that so every one may be as neere like himselfe in sinne and misery, as may bee. *He goes about like a roaring Lyon, seeking whom hee may devoure* (saith the Apostle.) A thousand wiles hath the Devill to corrupt our simplicity ; and hee is more laborious about this, then about any designe against the soule of man. The Devill is not so laborious, to make a breach upon a mans faith or patience, or the like, as upon a mans sincerity : because hee

knowes that every breach made upon this, is a stabbe to the heart, which will kill the soule for ever, if God do not admirably cure it. If labour will accomplish this designe, the Devill will not neglect that: *hee goes about seeking whom he may devour.* If terrours and affrightments will accomplish this designe, the Devill *will roare like a Lyon,* against a mans soule, as if he would teare him to pieces, and suddainely throw him into that bottomlesse pit, without all redemption. If flattery will be more prevalent then terrour, to bring about this designe, the Devil will *transforme himselfe into an Angell of light,* and promise us *all the Kingdoms of the World,* to winde us about to him.

And as the Devill is laborious about this designe, so *hee* hath many apostate children, such as have *lost that good that they seemed to have,* and these, as their father, being more like their father, then any of all his children beside, labour tooth and naile, not onely passively by example, but actively by promises and threatnings, especially in these last dayes, to turne aside soules from simplicity in doctrine and manners; and by their devillish craft have turned away many; so that many have made shipwrack of faith and a good conscience, and are gone in the way of *Balaam* the sone of *Bosor* that arch-hypocrite, studying and laboring to mischiefe Gods people, for preferments and honours in the world; *speaking lyes in hypocrisie, having their conscience seared with a hot iron.* And thertoere tis but needfull and seasonable, that I exhort you to looke

to your spirits, and take heed of those pitter root^s that yee bee not defiled by them. Remember what God saith by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, *When the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness which hee hath done, and commiteth iniquity, all the righteousnesses which he hath done, shall not bee mentioned, but in his trespasses which hee hath trespassed, and in his sin which he hath sinned, in that shall hee dye, Ezek. 18. 24.* And if once you waxe weary of well doing, and decline sincere walking, all thy former integrity shall not so much as once be mentioned to thy comfort, but to thy terrour often shall it be by way of upbraiding, mentioned to thy conscience here, and to the aggravation of thy condemnation hereafter, as one that hath tasted of the powers of the word to come, of the sweetnesse of the spirit of grace, and yet after this, hath grieved, opposed, and done despite against it.

Having therefore put your haad to the plough, looke not back: having begun in the Spirit, doe not end in the flesh: having begunne to order your conversation sincerely and uprightly, so continue unto the death, what ever you undergoe in life. All afflictions for righteousness sake shall be tolerable, comfortable, and at least augment your Crowne. They shall bee tolerable when at height: for no triall shall bee above your strength: *God is faithfull by whom you are tempted, who will with the temptation shew a way to escape.*

They shall not onely bee tolerable, but they shall bee also comfortable, when at the very

height. *For as the afflictions of Christ abound in you, so shall your conversation abound by Christ (as the Apostle saith.)* The pre-reception of bitters, makes sweeter the sweeter.

Finally, they shall be profitable, to augment your Crowne of glory in the life to come: *Blessed are ye when persecuted for righteousness sake, for great shall be your reward in heaven (saith Christ.)* And this reward shall come quickly, which addes to the worth and excellency of it: *Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, wherefore hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy Crowne, Revel. 3. 11.*

The second Sermon.

2 Cor. 1. 12.

For our rejoycing is this, the testimonie of our conscience that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.



He second proposition, now in order to be handled, is this, *That conscience can give testimonie, concerning the simplicity or hypocrisie, of a mans conversation.* Pauls conscience gave testimony with him, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, he had behaved himselfe in preaching and living, in life and doctrine, as a faithfull Minister of Christ ought to doe.

do. So likewise his conscience bore witnesse with him, concerning his sincere and holy desires, towards his Brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh. *I say the truth in Christ, I lye not, my conscience also bearing me witnes in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heavinesse, and continuall sorrow in my heart; for I could wish my selfe were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, Rom. 9. 1.* Iobs Conscience also gave testimony concerning his integrity. *Let me be weighed in an even ballance, that God may know mine integrity.* By this, and many such like expressions of his, tis most plaine, that his Conscience could give testimony concerning his conversation, what it was, whether good or bad. Davids Conscience did the like. *Thou O Lord (halt judge the people: judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousnessse, and according to mine integrity that is in me.* A large induction of particulars to this purpose, might easily be made, but I rather take another way to confirme this point.

The truth of this point (I conceive) will be better confirmed and opened, by setting before you what conscience is; and then you will plainly see what conscience can doe, and doth doe, in the soule of man. Conscience is better felt then defined, for ought that I can yet finde, among the learned. *Conscience is a part of the understanding in all reasonable creatures, determining of their particular actions, either with them or against them,* say some. *Conscience is a reflection of the soule upon it selfe,* say others. *Conscience (say I) is a naturall power which the soule of man hath, above all unreasonable*

sonable creatures, to compare his ways by some rule, and according as his wayes agree or disagree with that rule, so answerably to beare witnesse with or against him.

First, conscience [say I] is a naturall power, &c. My meaning is, conscience is an ability, where-with God endowed the soule of man by creation, as with other gifts and abilities, for his comfort, if he walked well; for his terrour, if he walked ill. We may not imagine, that conscience came not into the World, untill after *Adams* fall: this were to suppose *Adam* in Paradise, to be a man without conscience. Conscience indeed as an Accuser, and condemner, came not into the world, untill after *Adams* fall; but Conscience as an Acquitter, and comforter, was in *Adam* before his fall. As long as *Adam* obeyed the Commandements of God, there was no cause that Conscience should accuse him, but as soone as hee disobeyed Gods Commandement, conscience flew in his face, as appears by his flying from the face of God. Which plainly shews us this truth, that conscience was in *Adam* before his fall, but did not begin to accuse, till *Adam* began to sin.

Secondly, Conscience (say I) is a naturall power, which the soule of man hath &c. Now whether this power be in the understanding onely, or partly in the understanding and partly in the will, I finde controverted among the learned. My opinion, I here humbly lay downe, but I undertake not to state and determine the controversie. This power we speake of, I conceive to be a reflect act of the practicke understanding onely, transcendently,

dently seconded by the power of the Holy Ghost. Saint *Iohn* confirms the first, that it is a reflect act of the practicke understanding onely, where speaking of this power in the soule, saith, *And hereby we do know, that we know him, if we keep his Commandements, 1. Iohn. 2. 3.* That is, as if *Iohn* had said, We doe view our wayes by the word of God, (which is an act onely of the understanding) and finding them to be in some measure leuell with that holy rule, we have this comfortable reflection backe upon our soules, that our faith is not a fancie, but a faith which worketh by love, and so sincere and saving: which reflection, is no other, as I conceive, but an act of the understanding, collecting a divine conclusion from divine premises. He that keepeth Gods Commandements, knoweth God savingly, that he may safely conclude: but I doe keepe the Commandements of God, this I know, for I have viewed the Commandments of God, and my life by them: and therefore I know, that is, I am assured, that I truly and savingly know God: which is no other, but that power in the soule which we call conscience.

The Apostle Saint *Paul* (I conceive) confirms the second, that it is a reflect act of the understanding, *transcendently seconded by the Holy Ghost*, where he saith, *My conscience bearing mee witness in the Holy Ghost, Rom. 9. 1.* That is, my conscience transcendently seconded and assisted by the Holy Ghost, doth strongly testifie to my soule, that I am full of bowels towards my kinsmen after the flesh, and could doe any thing, or suffer any thing for their good. The order according

to

to which the Holy Ghost strikes in with Conscience, is this. The understanding makes a double proposition, one grounded in the Word of God, the other in the heart of man: as thus, He that keepeth the commandments of God, truly loves God; this proposition is grounded in the Word of God, But I doe keep the Commandments of God; this is grounded in the heart of man; And then drawes a conclusion from both; therefore I do truly love God. This conclusion whilst holy, and drawn from divine premisses, to wit, the Word of God, and the grace of God in the heart of man; the Spirit of God strikes in with the soule, in making this conclusion, and assists the weak soule; so that he concludes thus with *strong confidence*, that he truly loves God: and not onely secretly assists, but seconds, and saies the same thing to man, that his owne Spirit doth. Then is fulfilled that of the Apostle, *the Spirit beares witnessse with our spirits, that we are the sonnes of God*. If the premisses be corrupt, which the understanding makes (for the minde makes propositions suitable to the light that is in it, from which to argue the goodnesse or badnesse of man) then the Divell that lying spirit, strikes in and seconds the soule, in that corrupt conclusion which he collectes from corrupt principles, concerning himselfe: So that now the deluded soule is peremptory, and wiser then ten men that give a reason; in these is fulfilled that of the Apostle, *Their mindes and consciences being defiled*.

Thirdly, I affirme Conscience to be a naturall power, which the soule of man hath [*above all un-*

reasonable creatures, &c.] Brute beasts have no conscience, and yet they better serve God in their kind, then many of us which have conscience: Brute beasts want reason, and therefore are not capable subjects of conscience; and yet against reason and against conscience, man oft times does worle then a beast.

Fourthly, conscience (say I) is a naturall power which the soule of man hath above all unreasonable creatures [*to compare his wayes by some rule; and according as his wayes agree or disagree with that rule, so answerably to beare witnesse with, or against him.*] By the former part of this description, is shewed unto us, what conscience is according to its beng in the soule: *It is a naturall power, &c.* by the latter part of this description, is shewed unto us, what conscience is according to its office in the soule.

The office of conscience, according to the description here given, consists in two things. First, conscience *compares a mans wayes by some rule.* Secondly, conscience *beares witnesse with or against a man, according as a mans wayes agree or disagree with that rule.* First, say I, conscience compares a mans wayes by some rule. If the understanding bee enlightned with the truth, to wit, the word of God; then conscience compares the wayes of man by a perfect rule, to wit, the word of God. But if the understanding bee enlightned with naturall and morall principles or ly, then conscience compares a mans wayes according to these principles onely, and so by an imperfect rule. For 'tis my judgement, with submission to better, that
con-

conscience in every man followes that light which the understanding holds up unto it. This I know, that a man may, and often doth goe against conscience : but conscience goes not against that light which the understanding holds up unto it. A man may outwardly say this or that, contrary to the light of his understanding, but conscience inwardly speakes at the same time, according to that light. I will further cleare this unto you, by an apt example. *Paul* you know zealously persecuted the Church of God, and his conscience (for ought that I can finde) never checkt him, but doubtlesse, rather acquitted him for it; I meane as long as he remained unconverted. And the reason I thinke, is sufficiently rendered, where 'tis said, that he *did it ignorantly*, That is, according to that light which his understanding held up unto him, he thought he did God good service, in shedding the blood of his Saints, which methinkes makes manifest what I say, that conscience still followes the light of the understanding.

The Apostle *Paul* persecuted the Church of God, and yet obtained mercy. because (saith the Text) *he did it ignorantly* : hee did out of conscience (as I may say) shed the blood of the Saints. But now the most men have received the knowledge of the trueth; and therefore if now men persecute the Saints of God, either in heart, tongue, or hand, they goe against knowledge, and so consequently against conscience; for conscience followes the light of the understanding, and so comes neere the committing of the unpardonable sin, to the committers of which God hath said,

said, there shall be no mercy shewed, either in this world, or the world to come.

Here I would have you observe this, for the further clearing of what hath been said, *That the word of God is the rule by which conscience compares the wayes of men, so far forth as the understanding is enlightened by the word of God, and no further.* So farre forth as the understanding is ignorant of the word of God, so far forth conscience is silent. As long as Saint Paul knew not lust to bee a sinne, conscience never accused him for lust as a sinne. And this surely is one reason why many shun the preaching of the Word of God, and the study thereof, lest by *encreasing knowledge, they should encrease griefe*, as Solomon saith: lest by this means they should come to the knowledge of their sins, & so conscience pull them by the throat for them. Of such as these the Apostle Saint Peter speakes, where he saith, *Of this they are willingly ignorant, that by the Word of God the Heavens were of old, and the Earth, and the World that then was perished, 2. Pet. 3. 3, 4, 5.* That is, they did purposely doe as much as in them lay, to put out that light which was in their understandings, which told them that hee which at first made the Heavens by his Word, and did by his word destroy them with water, would one day againe destroy them with Fire and Brimston: this they did labour to keep themselves ignorant of, that so they might without check of conscience go on in their sins,

To such as these, I may truly say with the Apostle, *If our Gospel be hid, it is hid unto those which perish, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the*

the mindes of them which beleeve not, lest the light the glorious Gospell of Iesus Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them, 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. He that keeps himselfe in ignorance, that his Conscience may let him goe on quietly in wickednesse, loves to goe to Hell without controll. Thou that canst not endure, that thy conscience should reprove thee secretly, 'tis no wonder that thou canst not endure, that thy Minister should reprove thee publikely. Thou that canst not endure that thy Conscience should reprove thee for sin now, must endure whether thou wilt or no, Conscience to torment thee for thy sin hereafter.

The second thing that I would have you to observe is, this; That conscience doth compare all a mans wayes with the rule of the Word, so far forth as the understanding is enlightened with the Word. All that light which the understanding hath received from the Word of God, Conscience takes it and makes it a rule, by which he measures all a mans wayes, thoughts, words, and deeds, to try what agreement or disagreement there is betweene them and the rule.

That Conscience compares the thoughts of men by the Word of God, so far-forth as the understanding is enlightened by the Word, as well as words and deeds, is manifest by the language of the Apostle, where he speakes of the Gentiles on this wise. Which shew the work of the Law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their [thoughts] the meane while accusing or excusing one another, Rom. 2. 15. Divine light so far-forth as it shines into the hearts of heathens, conscience

science makes use of it as a rule, by which to examine their very thoughts, and so answerably to accule or excuse them; as their thoughts are found to agree or disagree with the rule. *S. Paul* likewise confirms this truth. *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witnesse in the Holy-Ghost; that I have great heaviness & continuall sorrow in my heart, for I could wish my selfe separate from Christ, for my kinsfolke in the flesh.* Saint Paul here tels us that his conscience did bear him witnesse, that his thoughts and desires were thus and thus sincere, respecting his brethren; which conscience will never doe, before he hath levelled a mans thoughts and desires by the word of God, and found them to be so: by consequence then it is mannifest, that conscience compares a mans thoughts by the rule, as wel as his words & deeds.

Conscience keeps Court in the heart, and therefore can and doth observe our thoughts, as well as our words and deeds. Conscience keeps a Court of justice in the heart, and sits upon the life and death of the soule, which is ten thousand times more precious then the body; and therefore will not sift this and that, and let others things goe, which the word condemnes as well, and as plainly, as it doth any thing else. The word of God you know condemns evill thoughts, as well as evill words, & not only grosse evil thoughts, as thoughts of murther, adultery, and the like, but *vaine idle thoughts*, and therefore conscience can do no lesse; as Gods Vice-gerent in this lower circuit but examine these, as well as words and deeds, by the rule of Gods word, to see how farre they agree to

Rom. 9.1.

or disagree from it. Which work when conscience hath exactly done, then it *bearcs witnesse with or against a man, answerably as a mans waies agree or disagree with this rule* : which is the last clause in the description of conscience, and comes now according to order and method to be a little opened.

Conscience when he hath compared a mans waies by the rule, and exactly found out how they agree with, or agree from it; the next thing he doth, is, he beares witnesse with or against a man. This clause I adde, in the description of conscience; because tis a divine power placed in the soule of man, to be as it were a Judge betweene God and man. Conscience takes notice of things together with God, and compares them by the rule together with God, and then pronounceth sentence with or against man, for God. First I say, conscience takes notice of things together with God: and hence it is, say the learned, that this power in the soule is called Conscience. *Scire* (say they) is said of him which knowes one thing alone, to as none else knowes it with him. *Conscire* is said of three or foure, which know some secret together. *Conscience* therefore, must needs signifie a combination of two at the least, in the knowledge of some secret thing. Now this combination cannot be between man and man; for man doth not know the secrets of my heart, no farther then as I reveale them to him: this combination neither cannot be betweene man and Angels, for they doe not know the secrets of my heart together with my selfe.

selfe. This combination must then needs be between God and man. God knows all our thoughts, *There cannot be a thought hid from thee*, saith Job of God. And he knowes all our words and deeds: *all things are naked before him, with whom we have to doe*. And man also by a gift from God, knowes together with God, his thoughts, words, and deeds; and compares them by the rule together with God; and then bears witness with or against himselfe to God: and this gift we therefore call Conscience.

Job 42.2.

Here note this, *That conscience beares witness with or against a man, no further then his waies agree or disagree with the word of God*. There can be no bribing of conscience, to speake better or worse of any man to God, then his waies deserve. Conscience beareth witness against a man, when having compared the waies of man by the word of God, he findes them to disagree from it. But here possibly some of you may say, Doth any mans Conscience beare witness against himselfe: against his owne Land-lord, in whose house he dwells? To this I answer, yes. The Apostle confirms this, where he saith, *If our hearts condemne us, God is greater then our hearts, and knoweth all things; If our hearts condemne us, &c.* Conscience will give testimony and sentence against the very wombe that beares him, if wicked; and so far-forth as he knowes it to be wicked. Conscience cannot now give an exact testimony, nor an exact sentence against a sinner, because the understanding holds not up unto it an exact light: *We know but in part, though God know all things;*

1 Joh. 3.20

and knowing but in part, conscience yet can doe his Office but in part; but what he does is faithfull and righteous, according to the light which the understanding holds up unto him. But hereafter when we shall all appeare before the judgement seat of Christ, Christ will by his Almighty power set up a glorious light in every mans understanding, so that they shall know all things done in the body, whether good or evill, as compleatly as Christ himselfe, and then conscience will speake as plain and as broad as Christ himselfe: and hence 'tis that men shall stand silent before the Judge of all the world.

The testimony which conscience gives against a man now, is very audible: so audible that it causeth the merriest heart, in the midst of laughter to be sad. It will make the stoutest sinner stoope his heart to ake and shake within him, and his countenance to gather blacknesse. But at the great day, it will make every sinner in *Belshazzars* case, and worse, when he saw the hand-writing on the wal. It will make sinners at their wits end: to *wish for Mountaines to fall upon them, and cover them,* or dispatch them utterly.

Conscience beares witnesse with a man, when having compared his waies by the rule, he findes that they agree therewith: So audible and so sensible is the testimony, that conscience gives now with a man, that it makes him to rejoyce in the midst of all outward troubles and hardships: *For our rejoycing is this* (saith Paul & Timothy in the midst of all their outward troubles) *the testimony of our conscience; that in simplicity and godly sincerity,*

rity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world. Conscience spake so loud, and so plain, and so comfortable, in giving testimony with them concerning their integrity, that they understood well what he said, and were more comforted by this still testimony within, then if hundreds without had given testimony with them to their adversaries, and said they were upright men. But much more audible and comfortable will the testimony of conscience with a man be, at the great day: but I let that alone till then.

At present I hope you see enough, by this description of conscience, to confirme the truth in hand, to wit, *That conscience can give testimony, concerning the simplicity or hypocrisie of a mans conversation.* Now the reasons why God hath given unto conscience this power, are these: First, that man might have something within him, to comfort or terrifie him, when all things without faile. Secondly, that Gods proceedings with man, may be by man confessed to be just. Lastly, that God at the great day, may dispatch a great deale of weighty businesse speedily.

First, God hath given this power to conscience, to give testimony concerning the simplicity or hypocrisie of mans conversation, that so man might have something within him, to comfort or terrifie him, when all things without him faile. If a man walke sincerely, conscience will be a comfort to him, when father, mother, husband, wife, wealth, and all friends faile him. And this comfort will be a continuall feast, in famine; con-

tinuall honour, in disgrace; continuall wealth, in poverty; continuall liberty, in bonds; continuall peace, in warre; continuall health, in sicknesse; continuall ease under every burden. This was meate to eate, to *Paul* and *Timothy*, which the world knew not of. Nay, this was transcendent consolation in the midst of troubles to *Paul* and *Timothy*, which the believing Corinthians dreamt not of: and therefore 'tis, that they thus wrote to them, *Our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we have sincerely ordered our conversation in the world.* As if they had said thus, Though we have lost many comforts, yet we have not lost all; we have something within us, which is a continuall comfort to us, in the midst of all the sorrowes and miseries, which we meet withall: and that is, the peace of a good conscience. And if man walke not sincerely, conscience is by divine appointment, to be an accuser, condemner, and in part an executioner of torture upon the delinquent, in this life. This worme shall gnaw within, when things are carried smooth without. This dog shall bite and tare within, when all are afraid to barke without. This blood-hound shall dog the sinner; let him goe with *Cain* into the Land of *Nod*, into what place he will, or to what employment he will: so that proud man shall feelee something within, for his wickednesse, when he feesles nothing without.

Secondly, God hath given this power to conscience to give testimony concerning the simplicity or unsoundnesse of mans conversation; That so all Gods proceedings with man, both here and here.

hereafter, may be confessed to be just. *One witnesse said God, shall not testifie against any person, to cause him to die, Deut. 35. 30.* Two witnesses God accounted sufficient, to vindicate every act of justice amongst men: but under two, God would not allow judicature against any man; that so judgement might be cleare, the Judge confessed to be righteous, and the malefactor silent. God the great Judge of all the world, keeps himself to this rule, in his proceedings of judicature against man. Two witnesses will God have, against every malefactor, to wit, Christ and Conscience. God doth immediately see all things done by man, and is a witnesse himselfe, to all that he commits in the body, as we guesse by his owne words, *Because they have committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours wives, and have spoken lying words in my Name, which I have not commanded them, even [I know] and am a witnesse saith the Lord, Ier. 29. 23.* By this we see, that God the Father sees our sins, and is a witnes; but because he will not be a witnesse in his owne cause, he will have two sufficient witnesses besides himselfe, to wit, Christ, and conscience: both very true.

The Devill would willingly be a witnesse against man, as an evill spirit that knowes much by man, but does not know so much as the spirit of man which is in him: and therefore not a sufficient witnesse. But if that evill spirit did know as much by man as mans own evill spirit which is in him, yet being corrupt, he would prove a false witnesse against man: a Knight of the Post and

swear any thing against man, to bring a great misery upon him, as is upon himselfe, if he might be admitted for a witnesse. such is his diuinish hatred and malice to all beings better then his owne; but therefore God will not admit of him as a witnesse, for, or against a man. Two true witnesses will God haue, one without a man, and another within him; one in Heaven, and another in Earth; to wit, Christ and conscience: *Behold I have given him for a witness to the people,* saith God the father of Christ, *Isa. 55. 4.* And this witnesse is in Heaven, saith *Job: Behold my witnesse is in Heaven, Job. 16. 19.* Not so in Heaven, that he is not also in earth; or as if he were ignorant of any thing done in Earth, for then he could not be a sufficient witnesse. *Job* speaks to Christ according to his speciall place of residence, and that is in Heaven: but Christ hath a Country-house here below in our hearts, where he hath one abiding continually, that is equall to himselfe, that tels him all, to wit, his spirit: so that Christ is as competent a witnesse as conscience, that sits as register still in the heart, and neuer stirs out of his place.

These two witnesses doe, as that man was commanded to doe which had a sheepe committed to his trust, and the sheepe torne in pieces by wilde beasts; he was to bring some of that which was left; some horne or hoofe, or any part else that was left, for a witnesse of the truth thereof, *Exod. 22. 1.* Thus Christ and conscience bring before God and the soule those precepts which were by God committed to man, to be kept, and which he

he hath suffered his unruly heart to break to pieces: my meaning is, so lively do these two witnesses set before the sinner, the breach of every precept, according to every circumstance, as ever any party under the Law, could set before the owner, the tearing in pieces of his cattell, by the limbs and pieces thereof. And this being done, divine sentence is given, and the soule must needs bee silent; being so legally handled; and Angels and Saints be forced to breake forth and say, *Righteous art thou, O God, in all thy waies, and holy in all thy works.*

Lastly, God hath given this power to conscience, to give testimony concerning mans simplicity or hipocrisie, that so *God at the great day may dispatch a great deal of weighty businesse speedily. And I will come neere to you to judgment, and I will be a swift witnesse against the forcerers, and against the adulterers and false swearers,* saith the Lord, *Mal. 3. 5.* What the Lord then spake respecting a particular judgment, the same will be Gods proceeding with all at the great day. The books shall be opened; Chrills booke, and the booke of Conscience; and so in a *moment*, in the *twinkling of an eye*; that is, very speedily all things shall be cleare to Judge and malefactor, without troubling Juries, and other witnesses, as we doe here, which would make a long worke, at that great assize; and ail pertons be judged and sent to their place, and so righteously judged, that not one shall open his mouth to complain. Now this could not possibly be a worke speedily done, if God had not given this power to Conscience

science, to reflect and give testimony, and to be in stead of, and beter then a thousand witnesses beside, and all debating *pro* and *con*, between them.

The wisdom of God is here to be admired: for he hath made such a witnesse to give testimony with Christ for, or against a man, every way so fit, that nothing in the world can be judged so fit. Christ we must all confesse to be very fit, to be Gods Delegate; because he came out of the bosome of God, and knowes exactly all his Lawes, which he hath given man to observe, which Angels doe not, and man is a party, and therefore both unfit. But the holy Ghost cannot be judged fit to be mans Delegate, because one with the Father and Sonne, and so a party in the cause. And as for Angels, they know not neither the proposed rule exactly, nor the aberrations of the Delinquent; and as for men, they are parties in the cause, and so would juggle together, and sweare one for another: or at least as one flesh and bone, with foolish pity spoyle a City (as we say) that is, they would speake flattering and halting, and so over-turne justice at last, after a great deale of doe with them. Now to prevent all this danger, toil, and stirre, God hath created such a power within man as to observe all things done by man; and no lesse one with man, then Christ is with the Father, and therefore as inexcusable a Delegate for man on the one side, as Christ is for God on the other side. And these two of an instant, without all disturbance, distraction, or turmoile, give in exact evidence concerning mans integrity or hypocrisie; and so speedily without all

all clamour, sentence, and execution, and all is finished; and the Judge of all the world does more weighty businesse in a moment, and far better then all the Judges in this world could doe in the age of the world.

Having thus given you the point, and the grounds of it; let us see in the next place, how usefull this may be unto us all. Hath God given power to Conscience, to give testimony concerning the simplicity or hypocrisie of mans waies? Why then let us all take heed, how we order our conversation in this world. Give leave to your souls to thinke nothing, speake nothing, nor doe nothing, but what you would have written down, and delivered in to the Judge of all the world at the great day. When we know a tale-teller is neer us, we are very carefull what we say or doe. Why? we have alwaies a tell-truth in our bosoms, where ever we go, or whatsoever we do; who will tell all to the Judge of all the world, that we think, speake, or do; and therefore let us watch over our thoughts, words, and deeds, and so think, and so speake, and so doe, as those that looke to have the comfortable testimony of conscience with them, at the great day of account; *that in simplicity and godly sincerity, we have had our conversation in the world.* Under the old Covenant, God hath a *Tabernacle of witness*, which was the inner Court where the Arke was, in which the Law was, to give testimony against the Israelites when they did evill. So God hath now under the new covenant, a *Tabernacle of witness*, and this is the inner Court, to wit, the heart, where
Consci-

Conscience is, to give testimony against us when we transgresse. And therefore let us set a watch upon our hearts, and tongues, and hands, and intreat God with *David*, to hold up our goings in his paths, that our footsteps slip not, *Psa. 17.5.*

I note this, because I see multitudes live as if there were neither Conscience, nor God, nor Devil, Heaven nor Hell. The speech of the Prophet of old, may I fitly here make use of. Men were then so audaciously wicked, that the very shew of their countenance did testifie against them: they declared their sins as *Sodom*, and hid them not: *Woe unto their soule (saith God) they have rewarded evil unto themselves, Isa 3.9.* Thus may I say of multitudes amongst us now, the very shew of their countenance doth testifie against them. The wanton eye, the fiery eye, the drowsie waling eye, the burly malmsey nose, the painted face, antick postures, gestures and fashions, do all as *Iobs* wrinkles in his face, testitie against thousands, that they little lay to heart this doctrine, *That Conscience can speak and tell all their doings to God.* Proud *Hamans*, time-serving *Doegs*, drunken *Nabals*, whorish *Iesabels*, scoffing *Ishmaels*, declare their sins as *Sodom*, and hide them not; and as for conscience, turne him off with a glasse of sack, and a play-house.

But let me say to these wretches, with the Prophet, *Woe unto their souls. for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.* You have made a long, black, bloody bill, for Conscience to open against you, the last day of this Terme, to wit, at death; which shall be tryed the first day of the next Terme,

Terme, to wit, as soon as you are out of the body: and then will Conscience give testimony, so strongly against you, that if you would give ten thousand rivers of oyle, nay, if you would give the fruit of your body for the sin of your soul, it shall doe no good; the cause shall goe against you, and sentence shall be past upon you: and then shall you know by wofull experience, the meaning of that place, *Rom. 2. 5. But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thy self wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*

Wherefore three things I would give in counsell to you all: seeing Conscience can give testimony concerning the simplicity or hypocrisie of mans waies, suspend him not; sleight not his language; but give diligent attention to what he saith. Let us not stop the mouth of Conscience, seeing he can speak, and tell us what we are. Many there are that labour to stop the mouth of Conscience, when he tels them plainly of their sinnes, and to destroy that divine power which Conscience hath, to speak in them, and to them. The Apostle *Peter* gives us a hint of these, where he saith, *Scoffers shall come in the last time, and shall say, Where is the promise of his comming.* For this (saith he) they are willingly ignorant of, that by the word God, the Heavens were of old, *2 Pet. 3. 5.* When Conscience told those scoffers, that would live in their sins, and scoffed at the day of Judgement, saying: Where is the promise of his comming; that God made the world by his Word, and drowned it quickly by his Word,

when

when it was overspread with wilfull wickednesse; and therefore you have like cause, to look for like swift misery, for as much as you are so wilfully and desperately wicked. This sharpe and plaine language of Conscience, they could not endure, and therefore willingly laboured to darken this divine light, and to silent this faithfull House-Chaplain. Thus it is with many sinners now; Conscience now and then, delivers stinging language to their souls, for such and such sinnes; and then they set to lift this faithfull Monitor out of his place; and because they cannot possibly doe this, being so immediately inducted by God, they strive to gag his mouth, and kill him; by running wilfully into wickednesse, against all checks and reproofs of Conscience, and friends, as men desperately resigning up their souls to the Devill, because God will not humour, and satisfie them in their owne waies: and so shipwrack Faith, Conscience, Soul, and all for ever. That which oft-times followes upon this, is selfe-stabbing, selfe drowning, selfe-hanging, selfe-poysoning, and the like.

This is crying wickednesse, and incurable wickednesse. 'Tis crying wickednesse to strive to gag and kill Conscience. 'Tis *Dei cidium*, to murder God. Conscience is no other but Gods Vicegerent in the soule, or rather, Gods judiciary presence in the soul. So far forth therefore as a man wilfully doth injury to this, he doth commit high Treason against the King of Heaven. 'Tis to stab the Judge of all the world as he sits upon the Bench, speaking Law and Justice, which
very

very nature abhors, as desperately devilish.

And 'tis incurable wickednesse: for 'tis to destroy the first *medium* of conversion, by which the holy Ghost works in man, to gag and kill Conscience. The first thing that the Spirit of God doth when he comes to convert a sinner, is to convince his Conscience, and to make that sting him for his sins, and then stir him up to long after, and to seek for Christ; and then gives faith in Christ, and so saves the sinner. Now he that strives to silence Conscience, undermines his own salvation, in the very foundation and first stone thereof: He doth wilfully and wickedly prevent his owne soule of all the good that God doth in this way to bring sinners home to himselfe. Thou doest little consider, O desperate wretch, what great wickednesse thou committest, that strivest to gag and kill Conscience. Thou committest double murther, in a spirituall sence; which is murder of the highest kinde: thou doest murder God and thine owne soule; and therefore I beseech you all to take heed of this practice. Seeing God hath given Conscience ability and parts to speak, let him speak freely, though he speake never so sharply and plainly, and doe not check him.

Nay doe not slight him: which is the next thing I would a little presse upon you. A man that can speak and speak to good purpose, though he be an enemy, we so far honour him, as to let him speak out fully what he hath to say, and not turn away the eare from him: give but this honour to Conscience. Many deale with Conscience,

science. Many deale with Conscience, as *Felix* did with *Paul*; he willingly heard *Paul* a while, concerning the faith of Christ; but when he came to reason of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, he let *Felix* into a trembling; & then saith he to *Paul*, *Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season, I will send for thee, Acts. 24. 25.* So many will heare Conscience, whilst he gives testimony with them, of this good thing, and that, which they have done, and it may be whilst he tels them of lesser faults; but when once he comes to reason thoroughly with them about their sins, which are as deare as right eyes, and right hands unto them, and threatens them home *with judgement to come*: when he tels them of that righteousness and temperance which the word commands, how much they have neglected it, and what they are liable to for it, and so sets their souls into a cold shaking sweat, then they have enough of Conscience, and they turne their eares and mindes to some other matters; and send Conscience away, till they be at better leisure: this is no other, but to sleight Conscience in his place.

God will make no other of this, but contempt of his prime Court of Justice here below, and thote that sit chiefe there, as for him: and thou wilt find no other, but a great deal of secret soul-mischief by this. God hath no other Court here below, but the heart of man; and no Judge in this Court, but Conscience: and Conscience being Gods chiefe Judge, wilt thou hearken to him when thou pleasest; and when thou pleasest, turne

turne the deafe eare to him, say what hee will? Dost thou think that God swears Judges for this lower circuit; which know not Law, nor how to speak upon the bench worth the hearing? Dost thou think thy selfe too great to be arraigned by God? and to answer to such interrogatories as he shall put unto thee?

As God will make no other but contempt of this, so thou wilt finde no other but a great deale of secret soul mischief by this. To sleight the voyce of Conscience, is the ready way to bring the soule into security and presumption, which are unsensible damning evils. When there was no King in *Israel*, nor Royall Courts of Judicature, every man did what was right in his owne eyes: So when this Royall Court of Conscience is sleighted, the soule will grow fearlesse and carelesse, and man will give leave to himselfe, to think, and speak, and doe as he listeth, and yet *promise peace to himselfe, though hee live in the wickednesse of his owne heart*; then which, what can be a greater soule-evill?

Wherefore honour God, in his Royall way of Judicature: and seeing he hath appointed an able Judge in thy Soule, of thy wayes; sleight him not, but *diligently hearken to what he saith*; which is the last thing I would a little presse upon you. Conscience can speake better of thy wayes then any man can doe: therefore give him leave to speake, and diligently observe all his words, & tell me what he saith to thee. Doth he not tell thee, that thou art a drunkard, an adulterer, a swearer, a prophaner of the Lords Day,

an unjust dealer, a selfe-seeker, a time-server, a man that orderest thy devotion and conversation futable to the times, a man that makest thine own ends thy ayme, in all thy actions? Doth hee not tell thee that thou art an idle person, a busie-body, a railer, a scoffer, and malicious person? Or what is it that Conscience saith unto thee? For hee speaks to no man else but to thy selte, so faithfull and discreet is hee and therefore I can enquire of none but of thy selte, O sinner, what Conscience sayes unto thee Conscience can give testimony with or against thee; prethee hearken to him, and tell me what hee saith. When Christ was arraigned, and stood still and said nothing, the high Priest arose (saith the Text) and said unto him, *Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witnesse against thee? Matth. 26. 62.* So say I to you, Conscience doth arraigne you now and then, and he doth give testimony; what testimony is it that he gives? Is it against you, or with you?

If against you: what is it that hee accuses you of, and condemnes you for? Doth he condemn thee for the vanity of thy thoughts, for the levity of thy words and deeds? Doth he condemn thee for the pride of thine heart, or for the pride of thine heart and life both? Doth hee condemne thee for the shedding of innocent blood? for scoffing and persecuting the wayes of God? Doth he condemne thee for hugging some secret sinne, which the word disallows? or for thy superficial perfunctory pietie? Whatsoever Conscience accuses and condemns thee for, honour this

this Vice-Roy so farre, as to weigh thorowly what he saith ; and call to minde thy wayes, and consider whether they have not been so as Conscience saith : and if so, then compare what Conscience saith of thy course, with the Word of God ; and if Conscience within, and the Word of God without agree in one, in what they say against thy course, doe thou strike in with thy Conscience and the Word of God, and say of thy selfe and wayes, as they say, and joyne with them in judging and condemning thy selfe and thy courses.

And then beg the Lord that he will not strike in and judge thee too ; for if he judge thee too, then thou art gone for ever. Tell him, that though thou hast sinned, yet Christ hath died ; and here hold. And then beg him to cleanse and cure thy wicked heart, that thou maist goe, and sinne no more lest a worse thing befall thee : namely, to be delivered from the hands of a condemning Conscience, into the hands of a condemning God, who will teare thee in pieces, and there will be none to deliver.

If Conscience give testimony with you, that you are *pure and upright*, as he useth the expression to *Job*, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, you have had your conversation in the world ; why then weigh your waies by the Word of God, and see whether the Word of God saith the same of your waies which Conscience doth : if so, why then do you strike in too, and say as Conscience and Gods Word doe, and so owne Gods great work of grace in your hearts, in making them

upright; and think that thou canst never declare love enough to God, which hath declared so much love to thee, as to make thee a man after his owne heart, to be a companion for his owne Son and Selfe, in grace and glory.

The third Sermon.

2 Cor. 1. 12.

For our rejoycing is this, the [testimony of our conscience] that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, wee have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards.



He third proposition, which now according to order & method, comes to be handled is this, *That conscioufnes to our selues, of the simplicity & sincerity of our conversation, will yield us joy in the midst of troubles.* Pauls and Timothies Conscience giving testimony with them, concerning the simplicity and sincerity of their conversation, made them to rejoyce in the midst of all the troubles they underwent. *For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity & godly sincerity, we have had our conversation in the world.* I think the Psalmist points at this truth too, where hee saith, *Unio the upright there ariseth light [in the darknes] &c. P. 112. 4.* By the darknes, I conceive he means troubles and injuries

injuries from wicked men, which becaule they are more vehement then many other troubles are, *The mercies of the wicked being cruelties*, the Psalmist elfwhere cals them, The sorrows of hel, as here he cals them *darknes*; now in this darknes, tho *the darknes*, that is very sharp misery, yet there ariseth *light in it*; by light I conceive is here meant comfort and joy from Conscience, giving testimony concerning their uprightnes, as attended with the Spirit of *glory & of God*, as *Peter* cals the holy Spirit of consolation. If you conceive not this Scripture plain enough, to content with my Text, read *Davids* language, *Psal. 7. 10, 11. My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart.* God judgeth the righteous; & God is angry with the wicked every day. As if *David* had said, This is my comfort in the midst of all the troubles & tears I am in, that my conscience tels me, my conversation in the world hath been led according to the dictate of an upright heart, no way injurious to these sons of *Beliall*, which labour to be every way injurious to me; and therefore I am sure that God which is alwayes a defence unto the upright, will be a defence unto me; God considers the waies of the upright, and smiles upon their souls to their great consolation, when the world frowns, this I finde by experience; but rotten wretches God is continually angry with, and this he will first or last (I am sure) make them to know with a witnes. *Solomon* likewise consents to this as a truth; to wit, That the testimony of conscience concerning the simplicity of mans cōversation, wil yield him joy

in the midst of troubles, as we may collect from his language, *Prov. 15. 23. A man hath joy (saith he) by the answer of his mouth.* When a man upon every occasion speaks sincerely, Conscience within cheers and comforts a man whatsoever follows upon plain dealing to the outward man. 'Tis me thinks as if *Solomon* had said, Let a man speak sincerely upon all occasions, and hee shall be sure to find his Conscience comfort him in the midst of all troubles that may follow upon it.

Troubles are either naturall, or accidentall. Naturall troubles I call such as men are born unto by reason of sinne. By the fall of *Adam*, *man is borne to troubles as the sparks flye upward, Job. 5. 7.* to troubles in body, in soule, in husband, in wife, in children, in servants, in kindred, in friends, in substance, in all things that are given man for his good. To the just at well as unjust, come troubles in all these; onely here is the difference, conscienciousnesse of simplicity and sincerity sweetens all those to the godly, whereas the wicked must swallow them in their full bitterness. That Conscience, which tels a man that in simplicity and godly sincerity he hath had his conversation in the world, will also tell him, that all troubles in the flesh, shall work together for the good of his Spirit; and that God will give strength to beare them, and a seasonable deliverance out of them; and this sweetens these bitters. That conscience, which tels a man, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, he hath ordered his conversation in the world, will tell him also, that 'tis a wise and gracious Father that doth thus, and thus

thus afflict him; yea, Conscience now and then shewes the soule the bright beames of Gods smiling countenance, that he may see that 'tis indeed a reconciled Father which doth afflict; and this like *Jonathans* hony revives much, and fetches life in swooning fits, under great troubles. That conscience which told *Job* that hee was sincere, told him also in the midst of all his troubles, that his Redeemer lived, and he should see him with his fleshly eies: moreover it told him, that when God had tried him, *that hee should come forth as gold*. This sugered his bitter potion, and sweetened every bitter drug he took. The like may bee said of *David*; his Conscience told him that he was upright; and this, Conscience told him also, that God was his God; *Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, and I will exalt thee*, Psalm. 118. 28. and that God would *light his candle, and enlighten his darknesse* *: that is, turne all his sorrows into joy, and his troubles into advantages; and this made every burthen easie. Thus we see, that conscioulnesse to our selves of the simplicity of our course, yields comfort in all troubles for sinnes sake, which I call naturall troubles.

* Psalm. 118.
28.

Troubles caused by Religion and religious walking, which I call accidentall troubles, because by accident, not of its proper nature, Religion exasperates wicked men against us, these I conceive my Text principally points at; and as for all these, though the fiercest kind of troubles, and therefore called by *David*, *The sorrows of hell*, yet if a Christian hath but the voice of con-

science with him, that hee hath walked simply and sincerely in the world, this will keep his head above water, though these waves be never so tempestuous: this will make a man sing in a dungeon at midnight, as *Paul* and *Silas* did: this will make a man smile in fiery flames, as many of the Martyrs did: this will make a man alwayes rejoyce in the midst of all sorrows: *As sorrowfull, yet alwayes rejoycing*, 2 Cor. 6. 10. Sorrowfull alwayes were the Apostles of Christ, such hard utage they alwayes met withall from the world, for the Gospells sake; and yet in the midst of all, joyfull, because of that sweet peace which their Consciences spoke unto them, that they were not such as the world judged them to be, but were simple and sincere in life and doctrine; and so this Scripture sounds the same in sense and substance with my Text: *For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdoms, but by the grace of God we have had our conversation in the world.*

You have seen now, in what troubles the testimony of Conscience, concerning a mans simplicity, will rejoyce a Christian. I will in the next place shew you, what rejoycing it is that the testimony of Conscience will yield a man in trouble. Joy is either sensuall or spirituall. Sensuall joy is a meer and naked joy in the creature, so far as it pleaseth the senses. Of this joy speaks *Solomon*, where he saith: That hee with-held his heart from no joy, Eccles. 2. 10. That is, any thing

thing that might delight any sense, hee got to him : he had *men fingers and women fingers*, and *all the delights of the sonnes of men*. Thus to order a mans conversation, is to live sensually and not sincerely ; and therefore Conscience gives testimony against this man, and not with him ; and so consequently checks and curbs this joy, and not causeth it : Conscience damps this mirth much, by griping the spirit now and then, in the midst of laughter.

Spiritual joy, is the soules rejoycing in God, as reconciled in Christ.

Spiritual joy, is the Soules rejoycing in God, &c. Divine joy is therefore called spirituall, because the subject of it is a spirit, and the object of it is a spirit, and all the manifestations of it spirituall. The subject of divine joy, is the spirit of man. Divine joy doth not take onely the care, or the eye, or the taste, or the smell, as carnall joy doth, but the heart : *Let the heart of :hem rejoyce, that seek the Lord*, Psal. 105. 3. The heart is broken for sinne, and this is made to rejoyce in Gods mercy, as a pardoner of sinne : the same bones which are broken, are made to rejoyce, *Make me to hear joy and gladnesse, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoyce*, Psal. 51. 8. Davids heart was so overcharged with sorrow, that his bones were ready to break in his body, and in this hee desired some divine refreshing, that so all things out of order might be quieted and composed againe. As sorrow is no sorrow, unlesse it take the heart ; so joy is no joy, unlesse it warm the spirit. And therefore saith David, *My soule shall bee*
joy-

joyfull in the Lord, [it] shall rejoyce in his salvation, Psal. 35.9.

God doth honour that in man with joy, with which man honours him by obedience; now, the soule of the upright obeyes God. *My soule hath kept thy Testimonies, and I love them exceedingly,* Psalm 119. 167. and therefore God made *Dauids* soule to rejoyce, *I delight to doe thy will, O God, yea thy Law is within my heart,* Ps. 40. 8. The Law of God was within *Dauids* heart, and therefore the joy of God was within his heart too. Hypocrites doe not with their soules keep Gods testimonies: their righteousnesse is like *Ephraims*, an outside righteousnesse that vanisheth, and so answerably God giveth them an outside superficial joy, that soone vanisheth and perisheth. They doe not set their hearts aright to obey God, as *David* useth the expression, *Psal. 78. 8.* and therefore God doth not tune and set their joy aright, so that it jarres at the best; their spirits and their faces are not awaies merry together; *in the midst of laughter their hearts gripe them.*

Divine joy takes the spirit of man wholly, and oft-times immediately. Divine joy takes the spirit of man wholly when at lowest. A dram, a sparkle, the least measure of divine joy that can be thought of, revives and makes glad the whole spirit of man, as a drop of strong Water warms the whole heart. Hence 'tis, that *David* when he had but a drop of divine joy distilled into his heart (as 'tis but a drop of this heavenly liquor, that our weak giddy soules can beare, whilst here below) presently he breaks out as a man warmed all over;

I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart, I will shew forth all thy marvellous works, Psal. 9. 1. The like phrase you shall find *David* often speaking in. *David* found his whole heart warmed by those sparkles of divine joy, which God strooke in his darke dolorous heart, and this fetcht life in him still, when ready to faint and swoon, and then all he returned to God again which he gave him; God warmed his whole heart with joy, and he returned his whole heart to God in thanksgiving. Divine joy warmes all that is within, and all that is without, soule and body, and sets both at worke to praise God. *Praise the Lord, O my soule, and all that is within me praise his holy Name, Psal. 103. 1.* All that was within *David*, was warmed with divine joy, and therefore all that was within him, hee would have should return thanks and praise unto the Lord. Elsewhere he calls upon all without him. *And my soul shall be joyfull in the Lord, it shall rejoyce in his salvation:* this is for all within him: then in the next verse, saith he, *All my bones shall say, Lord who is like unto thee? Psal. 35. 9, 10.* Divine joy warmes all that is within a man, and all that is without: it warms spirit, flesh, and bones; the whole man, and sets all on fire to praise the Lord.

As divine joy takes the Spirit wholly, so it oft-times seises upon the Spirit immediately, breaking forth in the heart as lightning, without any certaine known medium, by which to come into the soule. *David* doth darkly hint this, where hee saith, *Rejoyce the soule of thy servant for unto thee O Lord doe I lift up my soule, Psalm. 86. 4.* Thou needest

needest not this to speak in, or that creature to work by, to revive a drooping spirit, as if the Psalmist had said, Thou canst put joy and gladness into the sad soule of man, by thine own immediate work, as well as if forty Ministers were employed: this I believe, that none without thee can rejoyce me, but thou without any other canst do it; and therefore unto thee do I lift up my soul. Sometimes God doth work by secondary means and inferiour instruments, to rejoyce the souls of mourning sinners, as *David* would have comforted *Hannun* by his messengers: at other times, hee will make use of none but his own Spirit, to beare witnesse with our spirits that wee are the Sons of God, and walk before him as obedient children, and so rejoyces the soules of his people in troubles. Thus did God rejoyce the soule of *Paul* and *Timothy*, in their troubles and sorrows: by the Almighty work of his Spirit, hee assured their spirits, that they were his, and that their wayes were pleasing to him; which made them thus to speak, in the midst of miseries, *Our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, &c.*

Secondly, divine joy is called *spiritual*, because the object of it is a spirit. The object of divine joy is God, who is a Spirit, saith *John*. Divine joy hath God for its immediate object, and all other good things as beams of this Sunne, as streames from this fountaine, as mediate objects comming from, and relating to God. God alone is the ob-
ject

ject of divine joy, Most true 'tis, that God hath alwaies in his right hand heaven; and in his left hand earth, to wit, all the Kingdomes of this world, to bestow upon whom he will; but had he neither, or would hee part with neither, to any beside himselfe, but keep all in his own hand, yet an upright man would joy in him, and desire no better object to let out his affections upon. *Although the Fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruite be in the Vines, the labour of the Olives shall faile, & the field shall yeld no meat, the Flock shall be cut off from the Folds, and there be no Herd in the Stals, yet I will rejoyce in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation, saith the Prophet. Hab. 3. 17, 18. Habakkuk will rise in iudgement against a thousand thousand soules, which would never judge God worthy to be looked after, much lesse delighted in, if he had not Corn and Wine, Heaven and Earth to bestow upon his favourites. This Text I conceive is a plain testimony, that God alone is the object of divine joy: that is, not God as very wealthy, and very bountifull, but as very holy, and an absolute compleate being, above all things beside him. This was Pauls joy, to wit, in God alone, as he whom his Conscience told him, he served sincerely, though weakly.*

Upright men eye the Divine rule in their rejoycing, as well as in all other things. Now the Divine rule of joy, is, that it should be bounded and terminated in God. *Rejoyce in the Lord ye righteous, Psal. 97. 12.* This rule is repeated again and again in Scripture, to note how apt wee are to rejoyce in creatures, and sinnes which are worse

worse then any creatures, and not in God : as also to note, how strictly God lookes at this, that we should onely make him the object of our joy, and all other good things as beams of the Sun, as blessings from his hand ; and so consequently to rejoyce still, as long as we have communion with God, and our Consciences witnessing with us that we sincerely serve him, though we have nothing else in the world beside him, as *Paul* and *Timothy* did. *For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our cōversation in the world, &c.*

Thirdly, divine joy is called *spirituall*, because all the manifestations of it are spirituall. They that have this joy in their hearts, do not let their tongues sing ribaldry and vanity, such as flesh and bloud delights in, but they sing in the waies of the Lord, *Psal. 138.5*. That is, they rejoyce in divine things, to be thinking and speaking of, and walking in the waies of the Lord. 'Twas *Pauls* and *Timothies* matter of joy, that they could walke sincerely in the waies of the Lord, and this they humbly gloried in. Such as have the joy of the Lord in their hearts, their tongues speake, and sing in such a manner, that God is extolled and magnified, according to one attribute or another, which is *making melody to God*, as the Apostle terms it. As here in my Text, the Apostle so expressed divine joy, that the power and goodnesse of the Lord were magnified, that hee could and would give internall comfort, to those that did sincerely, though weakly, serve him, when all external

ternall comforts failed. Divine joy doth not, as carnall joy, transport men into drunkards, whore-masters, wantons, libertines, and so turn them out of the waies of the Lord; but raises their spirits to a higher pitch of love to God, and so makes them walke more strictly and cheerfully *in the wayes of God*. Divine joy makes a man rejoyce and work righteounesse, and not rejoyce and work wickednesse. *Thou meetest him that rejoyceth and worketh righteounesse, Isa. 64. 5.* Paul and Timothy thus rejoyced, that they could worke righteounesse, that they could order their conversation sincerely, though by many handled injuriously. *For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our conscience; that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, &c.*

Divine joy is the souls rejoycing in God [as reconciled in Christ.] Divine joy, as man upon earth is the subject of it, hath God in Christ for its object: that is, God as reconciled in Christ; for otherwise God is an Enemy, and no man rejoyceth in an Enemy. *And not only so, but wee also rejoyce in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the attonement, Rom. 5. 11.* Wee cannot joy immediately in God, as Adam could, because of our sin in Adam, wch made God angry with us: we must now have some to interpose between God and us, in whom is made up what is wanting in us, and so Gods anger against us appeased: and therefore 'tis, that the Apostle thus speaks in the person of the godly, *Wee joy in God [through] our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom*

wee

wee have received the atonement. This is sweetly set forth also unto us, under metaphoricall terms by the Prophet *Isaiah*. *I will greatly rejoyce in the Lord; my soul shall be joyfull in my God, for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a Bridegroom decketh himselfe with ornaments, and as a Bride adorneth her selfe with Jewels, Isai. 61. 10.* God as cloathing us with the garments of Salvation, and covering us with a robe of Righteousnesse, is the object of joy to fallen man; and thus we know, he doth in Christ. God freely reveals an infinite love to man in Christ. and this begets love to him, and joy in him. He washeth away all our sins in Christs blood; covers all our wants with Christs righteousness, subjects his Son to suffer what we had deserved, and to merit for us, all that from which we were justly excluded, to wit, communion with God, and eternall life. This love God sheds abroad in the heart of man, and this makes man love God and joy in him. God out of Christ, is no other but a condemner of man: Conscience so apprehending God, is no other but a tormenter of man: and man between both these is in no other but hell: and there is no joy in hell. God in Christ reconciles man to himselfe, and then God joyes in man & man in God. The blood of Christ makes peace between God and man, and between man and his Conscience; and makes God acquit, and Conscience acquit: God to speak peace, though man be not perfect: Conscience to speak peace, though man walke weakly, yet whilst sincerely; & this makes divine joy

joy in the heart, in the midst of all troubles, natural or accidentall. *For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, &c*

You have had a brieft hint now, by what hath been said, what that joy is, which the testimony of Conscience brings to the soul, to wit, a *consolatory joy*, as I may fitly call it. A joy of peace and friendship, between God and man, and between man and himselfe, to wit, Conscience. Conscience tels that man which walkes sincerely, that hee for his part is at peace with him; and that God is the like, though men and devils be at variance with him; and that he shall have favours spirituall and temporall here, and eternally hereafter, say and doe all his enemies what they can; and this makes the heart of man leap within him. in the midst of troubles, as the Babe in *Elizabeths* wombe, when she heard the salutation of *Mary*, *Our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the World.*

Having shewed you in what troubles, the testimony of Conscience will give joy; and what joy 'tis that Conscience causeth in the soule, I will in the next place shew you the ground of the point, why the testimony of Conscience, concerning a mans simplicity, must needs cause joy in the midst of troubles. This testimony of conscience is attended with a glorious power, as the Apostle calls it.

ous power of him, saith the originall, that is of the Holy-Ghost, which makes the testimony so strong, and so transcendently comfortable, that troubles and sorrowes for sincerity sake, though never so great, cannot possibly over-bear the heart. *Strengthened with all might according to [his glorious power] unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness,* 1 Cor. 11. There is a glorious power, attending the testimony of Conscience extended to upright soules, in times of great troubles for uprightnesse sake, which strengthens them *with all might*, so that all burdens cannot depresse them; *unto all patience and long-suffering*, so that they will never be weary, and out of breath with bearing: and to doe all this with *joyfulness*, so that no outward hardship can utterly exhaust joy out of their spirits. Now, the testimony of conscience concerning our simplicity and sincerity, being attended with this glorious power in times of trouble, as Peter saith, 'tis the spirit of glory and of God rests upon such, it must needs keep up the dolorous spirit of man, and make him rejoyce in the greatest troubles. Paul and Timothy doubtlesse found this glorious power, attending the testimony of their Conscience strengthening them with all might unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness, which made them thus to say, *For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.*

Secondly, the testimony of Conscience concerning mans simplicity and sincerity, must needs rejoyce

joyce a man, in the midst of all troubles, because Conscience now minds a man, that he walks in the midst of all enemies and troubles, just as Christ did. There was no guile found in Christs mouth, though he was put to it againe and again: Whatever he underwent from his Father, from the devill, and his children, yet still he walked sincerely, and faultered not in the least kinde, for the greatest advantage, though hee was profered all the Kingdomes in the world, to doe it. Now, when Conscience tels a man, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, hee hath had his conversation in the World, it doth at once tell him that hee hath walked in this world, just as Christ did. As hee was, so art thou in this world, O my soul; which cannot but rejoyce the heart, in the midst of the sharpest afflictions for Christs sake. Thy Saviour, O my soul, though God, yet was called a devill, nay, *Belzebub* the Prince of devils, though temperate, yet called a drunkard and Wine-bibber, and companion to Publicans and Harlots; though a man without guile, yet called a deceiver; though innocent, yet scuffed, imprisoned, condemned and executed as a malefactor. 'Tis just thus with thee, O my soule: thou art studious to walke uprightly, and yet censured for an hypocrite: thou labourest to bee better then any, and yet the world judges thee to bee worse then any: thou labourest more for humility and love, then for all the wealth in the World, and yet the World judges thee to bee fuller of pride, and malice, then any man: thou dost not blow a Trumpet, when thou givest

almes, but hideſt from thy left hand, what thy right hand doth, and therefore the world thinkes that thy Religion towards God, is without mercy towards man : thou thinkelt no evill to others, but laboureſt to doe good to all, and yet all almoſt thinke evill, or ſpeake evill, or doe evill againſt thee. In this, O my ſoule, thou art not alone, 'twas the condition of thy Saviour ; therefore mourne not, O my ſoule, but rejoyce, according to the divine rule, that thou art made like him. Thus the testimony of Conſcience concerning a mans ſincerity, brings in matter of comfort and joy to the ſoule of man, in the miſt of troubles, and makes it ſmile, when under heavy burthens of cruelty.

Laſtly, it muſt needs be, that the testimony of Conſcience concerning the ſimplicity of a mans converſation, ſhould miniſter joy in the miſt of troubles, becauſe ſuch plainly ſee their intereſt in the divine Word of conſolation. *Be glad in the Lord, and rejoyce ye righteous, and ſhout for joy all ye that are upright in heart, Pſal. 32.11.* Conſcience now tels me that I am upright in heart ; and that in ſimplicity and uprightness I have had my converſation in the World ; and ſo conſequently that joy here, as well as hereafter, belongs to me. Out of this reaſoning, between Conſcience and the divine Word of conſolation, joy will break forth in the ſoule firſt or laſt, lade an upright man with what burthens you will. *Rejoyce all ye that are upright in heart,* ſaith God : thou art upright in heart, ſaith Conſcience to a ſincere ſoule ; and Conſcience will not ſtay here, but will preſſe

preſſe upon the ſoule to apply his owne mercies ; why then doſt not thou rejoyce ? Doſt thou think it a ſmall matter, to diſobey a command of God ? This preſſing language of Conſcience, will make a ſincere ſoule ſtrive hard, and pray hard, to rejoyce in afflictions for Chriſts ſake, according to the divine rule, which prayer God will heare, and bring the upright ſoul at laſt, to ſay in the miſt of troubles, with theſe champions in my Text: *For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our conscience ; that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſedome, but by the grace of God, we have had our converſation in the world.*

Having given you the point and the grounds of it, a word or two I would ſpeak by way of application, to you that are unſound, and then a word more to you that are ſincere, and ſo conclude this point. This doctrine may in the firſt place ſerve to unfold a riddle to you that are unſound. Poſſibly you may wonder to ſee a man go rejoycing to priſon, and to fire and faggot, eſpecially when cenſured by learned men, for ſuch and ſuch a malefactor : you it may be thinke of ſuch a man, as hee of *Paul*, that he is mad and merry without cauſe, as bedlams are ; or elſe that hee laughs from the teeth outward, as hee that would put a good face upon an ill matter. No, no, doe not judge ſo uncharitably, it may be this man hath meat to eat, which yee know not of. It may bee hath his Conſcience teſtifying within, that hee hath walked in all uprightneſſe, and is not ſuch a one, as the World hath cenſured him to be ; and this makes him rejoyce, in the

midst of all troubles. 'Twas wonderfull to *Nebuchadnezzar*, to see the three children walke in the fiery furnace as if they had been walking in his stately walkes, because he was not aware that they had such a divine comfortable companion, as they had. So 'tis wonderfull to blinde worldlings, to see men so cheerrull in suffering for trifles in Religion (as they call them) and the reason is, because they know not that divine comforter, Conscience; which is continually within them, and unto them a feast: this is to walke sincerely, to be tender to obey all Gods will, and this Conscience tels the soule, in the midst of all the troubles he undergoes, from men of corrupt mindes, and large Consciences; and this language of Conscience, being attended with the *glorious power of the Holy-Ghost*, as a comforter, this soule cannot but rejoyce, though bleeding upon a Pillory, groaning upon a Rack, dying upon a Crosse, and condemned by wise men for a foole, in standing out in such small matters.

Secondly, as this doctrine tels you blind soules, the reason why some are so cheerrull, under great troubles, for small things; so it tels you that are a little more growne in hypocrisie and wickednesse, that your designe against the godly is frustrate. The maine designe of the Devill and his Children, in all the troubles he puts them to, is, to deprive them of all joy and comfort, and to make their being upon Earth Hell, which is a place without all consolation. Now this they can never doe, for as much as they cannot deprive them of the peace of conscience, & joy of the holy Ghost, which

which go hand in hand, in an upright heart. True it is, if all the joy of the godly did consist in outward things as wicked mens joy doth, then possibly they might serve the godly, as God will one day serve them, to wit, utterly strip them of all consolation; but the least part of an upright mans joy, consists in externall things; his prime joy is within, from Conscience, and the Holy-Ghost, which keep company alwaies in it; and these two, all the wicked men upon earth, nor the all Devils in Hell, cannot suspend, much lesse silence from speaking comfort to an upright heart. Conscience will still say this within, that he which to walkes as before mentioned, is upright; when men and devils without, say, that he is an hypocrite, a dissembler and not worthy to live. And the Holy-Ghost will still second this language of Conscience, by speaking over the same againe: in such glorious expressions, and with such sweetned words, will the Spirit of God beare witness with the spirit of man, that doe what you will to this man, he will still, notwithstanding all, rejoyce. Cast him into prison, nay cast him into a dungeon, a dirty dungeon, as *Jeremies* was, nay, cast him into a fiery Furnace, into a fiery Furnace heat seven times hotter then ordinary, *Give his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that pluck off the haire, as the Prophet speaks, Isai. 50. 6.* do what you will to him, yet you wil never deprive him of his joy. As long as breath is in his nostrils, Conscience will comfort him; and when this is gone by thy cruelty, he will be in fulnesse of joy; and in the fuller, by how much the more cruelty thou

hast inflicted on him. The joy of Conscience is proportioned to what we suffer, for Conscience; *as the afflictions of Christ abound in us, so shall our joyes both here and hereafter.* And therefore doe not break your sleep and your braines, to plot mischief against the upright, for they will have more joy in suffering cruelty, then you can have in inflicting it. You do but lessen your owne joy, to encrease theirs. the more terrible you are unto them, the more shall the testimony of Conscience be attended, with a glorious Spirit of consolation, which will make them rejoyce and bee *exceeding glad* under all that you can inflict; and this will exceedingly vex you.

Thirdly, this doctrine will acquaint you with this truth: That if conscioufnesse of sincerity, will lessen and sweeten troubles, by giving joy to the upright in the midst of them; conscioufnesse of hypocrisie and unsoundnesse, must needs imbitter all troubles, and make them more pressing and piercing, upon you that are halters and time-servers: this was that which *Jobs* friends drove at, in all their discourses with him, to bring him to sorrow doubly and trebly, for as much as all his outward miseries were attended (as they conceived) with inward rottennesse; intimating, and that truly, that it must be so and will be so with all hypocrites, when Conscience is once thoroughly awakened, to tel them of their unsoundnesse, under afflictions. What a terrible sting will this be, to a man in poverty, when his Conscience shall tell him, thou hast shuffed and shifted basely to get wealth, and yet by all thy unjust waies, thou canst
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scarce keep a cue above a beggar. This blunt language of Conscience, will bee such an addition of sorrow to poverty, as will exceed the pressure of poverty when at greatest. What a sting will this be to a man in disgrace, when his Conscience shall tell him, Thou hast been a time-server; one that hast studied to humour and please men, more then God, that thou mightest get honour, and keep honour in the World, and yet for all thy dog-like fauning and flattering, thou stinkest in the nostrils of all, and art cast unto the dung-hill as unsavory salt? What a sting will this be to a man in sicknesse and death, when his Conscience shall tell him, that hee hath been but an outside Christian, all the dayes of his life; a man zealous about humane inventions and bodily exercises, to give God the out side, and carelesse to worship God in spirit and truth? this close language of Conscience, will pain a man more then any sicknesse, or death can doe. This was that which stung *Balaam* worse then death, that his Conscience told him, hee had been but an hypocrite all his life. This made *Judas* hang himselfe, after hee had sold his Master for Money, for as much as his Conscience told him then strongly, that he had been but an hypocriticall follower of Christ, from the first to the last. And thus would every rotten wretch do or worse, in every little trouble, if God should not admirably step in, and restrain, and hinder; so terrible is the sting of Conscience, when it testifies against a man, and such deep additions of griete it bringeth to the soule in every calamity. *Sharp arrowes and coals of*
Juniper.

Juniper, Conscience shooteth and kindleth in the soule of man, in every trouble, when it testifieth against him as the Psalmist useth the expressions, in relation to the hypocrite, the man concerning whom I here treat of, *Psal. 120. 4.*

Wherefore I would exhort you all that are unsound at heart, to beg upright hearts at the hands of God, that you may walk uprightly, and so have the testimony of Conscience with you, to rejoyce you in all your troubles. You labour by hooke and by crook to get wealth to stand by you, and to comfort you in troubles; and this will prove *gravel in your bellies* to torture you, as *Solomon* affirmeth, so farre it will be from comforting you in troubles. The testimony of Conscience concerning your sincerity, is better then all the wealth in the world, to stand by you and to revive you in troubles. You flatter and fawne, turn and winde, shuffle and shift, to get great men to bee your friends to stand by you, and to comfort you in troubles; and alas! their favour is a vapour; as unconstant as the winde. Walk sincerely, and conscience will be a fathfull friend for you to the death; yea after death in judgement. If thou hadst the favour of all the Princes in the world, yet could not they procure for thee a dram of comfort in sicknesse, in death, or in judgement: Conscience in all these times can, and will procure for thee, not only drams, but flagons of consolation, if thou walk sincerely. Conscience is an incomparable friend, or foe, in sicknesse, death, and judgement.

The blindness and folly of man above all other creatures, is much to be wondered at; hee hunts after

after things *which are not*, as *Solomon* saith, to be comforters to him, and takes no pains to procure that which will indeed bee stable and abiding comfort to him in all states Riches, and honours, and friends, all the things of this life they are called by *Solomon*, *things that are not*, because they are not such things as the blind heart of man conceives them to be : he thinks they are sufficient to make him happy, and they are not so. The least fit of sicknesse will *non-plus* all these things, for reviving the soul. Vain man like that fool, thinks that he hath comfort enough for many years, that is, for all his life, when he hath great revenues in the world, and therefore sings a *requiem* to his soul, as if there needed no other thing, to the tranquillity of the Spirit, thorowout a mans life, but worldly things ; and alas ! these things are not abiding, but still upon the wing, ready to fly from us ; and if they were abiding yet they are not satisfying ; and therefore *Solomon* calls them, *Vanity and Vexation* to the spirit. Conscience is a lasting friend, and a substantiall friend, to the spirit of man. A friend that hath such waters of life, which will revive the soul in the greatest extremities ; and hee is a fountain made by God, that will never wax dry ; So that the soule, as long as she keeps her selfe sincere, shall never be without a spring of joy, boiling up day and night within her.

And this joy is not a low prised commodity, a thing little worth : 'tis called in Scripture, *a joy of the Lord*, such a joy of God, as is the *strength* of man. When the Levites had opened the Law unto the people, their Consciences were awakened,
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and smote them so, that they wept, saith the Text, and weakened and unfitted themselves, for the duties of the day; and therefore the Levites were fain to comfort them, that Conscience might take hold on something to work joy in them, which is the strength of the soule, unto the duty of thanksgiving, which was the speciall work of that day. As an accusing condemning Conscience, secretly consumes spirits and strength of soule and body; and when attended onely with a legall spirit, begets such a horrid grieve in the heart of man, as unfit for the highest and noblest service of God: So an acquitting Conscience doth exhilarate and revive the soule; as being attended with an Evangelicall spirit, begets such a joy in the heart, as tunes and strengthens it unto all divine duties, especially unto thanksgiving, which is the highest and hardest divine lesson that can be plaid upon the heart of fallen man, but makes the sweetest melody in the cares of God, of all divine lessons committed to man to learn. If thou then wouldst be a sweet singer in *Israel*, a man apt and able to that which God most loves, walk so that Conscience may still be an acquitter within thee: if this accuse and condemne thee, 'twill put every string in thy heart out of tune, consume thy spirits, and make thy living a continuall dying, and yet death undesirable.

Secondly, divine joy is called in Scripture an *exceeding joy*. *I am exceeding joyfull in all our tribulations*, saith Paul, 2 Cor. 7. 4. The joy which Conscience gives to an upright man in all tribulations for uprightnesse sake, is an exceeding joy; a
joy

joy that doth farre more take, content, and delight the soule then any other joy can doe : so the Apostle explains this clause, by that which goes before it in the same verse. *I am filled with comfort,* (saith he) *I am exceeding joyfull in all our tribulations.* Conscience gives such a joy to the soule in tribulations, that fills the soule with comfort, which is more then all the sweets and delights of this world can do. The delights of this life they doe not reach the soule of man ; they reach no farther then the externall senses, so farre are they from filling the soul with comfort : and yet they do not fill nor satisfie these neither ; for the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing, nor the nose with smelling, nor the tongue with tasting, nor the hand with handling. 'Tis but a tyring, and not a satisfying joy, that all outward things bring to the outward senses. That joy which onely the externall senses bring into the soule, Solomon calls *madnesse*, as not worthy of the name of joy, because it reaches not the spirit of man as rationall, but as meerly sensitive. The joy which conscience brings into the soule, doth not barely reach the soul, but it fills it, and satisfies it. *My soule shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatnesse, & my mouth shall praise thee with joyfull lips: when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate upon thee in the night-watches, Ps. 63. 5, 6.* If thou wilt live all thy daies with the joy of a bruit, with a meer sensuall outside, spiritlesse, vain, vexing joy, then thou needst not take pains to order thy conversation sincerely, to get thy Conscience to testifie with thee ; but if thou wouldst live all thy daies,

dayes in the joy of a man that bears the Image of God, then must thou strive so to walk, that Conscience may bear witness that thou art sincere.

The Scripture doth not stay here, but calls divine joy *everlasting*; which is an attribute so high, that it leads us necessarily to the originall, to wit, God, who is everlasting. As hell is a place of everlasting sorrow to all that be in it, because a river of brimstone from an everlasting fountain, runs to it; so heaven which is begun in joy upon earth, to wit, in the hearts of the upright, 'tis everlasting, because fresh streams of consolation continually come from an everlasting fountain, to wit, God. God alwayes seconds Conscience in him that is sincere, with such a *glorious power* as Saint Paul calls it, that though he be alwayes in sorrows for Christs sake, yet he is alwayes rejoicing: *As sorrowfull, yet alwaies rejoicing*, 2 Cor. 6 10. You may many waies cause sorrow to an upright man, but yet joy will live in all and outlive all his sorrows. You may set on fire the body of an upright man, and consume that; but you can never set on fire his joy and consume that. You may various waies kill a sincere man, but you can no way kill his joy, as long as he holds fast his integrity. The joy that Conscience gives to the soule of man, upon testimony of his sincerity, 'twill live in fire, 'twill live in water, 'twill live in this land, 'twill live in any land; famine cannot itaue it, plague cannot infect it, the sword cannot murder it, the rack cannot teare it; 'tis very healthy, 'tis long-liv'd, 'twill never die: 'tis from heaven, and will abide with the soule untill he come to heaven; and then will be

be consummated, to give full solace to the soul for ever. If then thou wouldst have joy to stick by thee, in health, in sickness, in peace, in war, in plenty, in famine, in honour, in disgrace, in liberty, in bonds, in life, in death, and eternally after death, walk so that thy Conscience may say that thou art simple and sincere in thy conversation.

The Scripture staies not here, but calls divine joy *unspeakable and full of glory*. As that joy which iust men made perfect inherit, is beyond conception, so that it cannot enter into the heart of man to conceive of it: so that joy which Conscience gives to upright men in troubles, 'tis beyond expression, the tongue of man cannot fully expresse it. I doe not affirm that the heart of man cannot fully conceive it, though possibly it may bee so. 'Tis joy unspeakably strong, stronger and more vehement, then the joy of worldlings, when corn and wine and oile increase; and yet 'tis hard to expresse how much joy an earthy heart hath, in great earthly increase. 'Tis joy unspeakable sweet, so that he which tastes of this joy, tastes no more sweetness in sensuall things, then in the white of an egge: 'tis sweeter then the honey or the honeycomb: that is, sweeter and more pleasing to the soule, then all the delights of this life, to the carnall heart; and yet 'tis hard to expresse how sweet and pleasing sensuall delights are, to the carnall heart of man.

'Tis joy unspeakably pure: as *David* saith, that *the fear of the Lord is clean*; so I may say, that the joy of the Lord, which he gives to man upon the testimony of Conscience concerning his sincerity,

'tis

'tis clean; that is, 'tis pure, unspeakably pure, and holy. What was said of the generation of Christ, that may bee said of the generation of divine joy, *Who can declare his generation?* saith the Scripture of Christ; so may I say, *Who can declare the generation of divine joy?* 'Tis begotten in the heart, as Christ was in *Maries* womb, to wit, by the Holy-Ghost: 'tis shed abroad in the heart by the Holy-Ghost: 'tis continually nourished and cherished by the Holy-Ghost. It fills the heart full of holy thoughts; the mouth full of holy words, and the hands full of holy deeds. It is immediately from heaven, and makes a man have his conversation in heaven, whilst on earth.

'Tis joy unspeakably precious: a dram of it is more worth then the world: a damned soul in hell would give ten thousand worlds, if there were so many, for the least drop of this cooling comforting liquor, to assuage his scorching torments but for a moment. It hath heaven in it, with which what can bee compared for worth? 'Tis *joy unspeakable and full of glory*. The smiling face of God, which is more glorious then the Sun, may be seen in it, so diaphanous is it.

'Tis joy unspeakably lasting: whereas all other joyes die when man dies, if not long before; this joy lives, as long as the soule and God lives. Labour then so to live, that Conscience may testify before God and you, that you are sincere, and so lead your soules into that unspeakable joy which will make you unspeakably happy.

I have now a word or two to you which walk sincerely and uprightly in this world, and so I shut
up

up this point. If you doe not yet find experimentally, the truth of this point ; to wit, your consciences causing you to rejoyce in the midst of your troubles, by a lively testifying your integrity to you, then by prayer plead your integrity to God, and intreat him so transcendently to second conscience, with his *glorious power which worketh in us*, that your hearts may be revived under every pressure for pitties sake. Thus *David* was forced to doe sometimes, to wit, plead his integrity, to find the benefit of it in troubles : for God will be sought unto for every good thing, though we be never so sincere, *Let integrity and uprightness preserve us, for I wait on thee, Psalm 25.21.* *David* you see was put to it, to plead his integrity to God, to obtaine the benefit of it in troubles ; and thus must we still doe, if we find our hearts to droop in troubles, although we are conscious to our selves of our upright and innocent conversation. Say, Lord thou knowest that I have walked uprightly concerning this thing and that, about which I am troubled, and therefore doe thou stand up in my heart, and second my conscience by the Almighty power of thy holy Spirit, and make it speake peace so lively and so gloriously within me, that I may rejoyce in this tribulation for thy sake ; that I may find my integrity as a cordiall to me, to keep me from fainting in my minde, and from stretching out tongue or hand to iniquity.

If you finde the comfortable testimony of conscience reviving and rejoycing you in your troubles, then blesse God with *David*, that he

hath enabled you so to walke in this wretched world, as to have the voice of conscience with you that you are sincere. 'Tis of God that we walk uprightly a moment : did not he stand by us, and watch over our deceitfull hearts, and uphold our goings in his paths, we should shew our selves hypocritically wretches in all our waies. *God is my strength and power, and he maketh my way perfect, Psal. 18. 32.* When the lively testimonie of conscience, concerning *Dauids* integritie, had rejoiced, and raised his dull spirit, then he tooke wing, and made his soule mount up to Heaven like an Eagle, to magnifie God which had been such strength and power to him, as to make his way perfect, that is, sincere, and so capable of deliverance from his insulting enemies [*God*] *is my strength and power, and [he] maketh my way perfect.* *David* would not appropriate the praise of his upright and innocent conversation to himself, as if he by his owne wisdom, strength and goodness, had made his way perfect and upright ; he had through experience of the rottenness of his owne heart, and his aptness to declare it, if God had not been a speciall strength and aid unto him, in his conversation ; and therefore doth he so humbly and imitably say, [*God*] *is my strength and power, and [he] maketh my way perfect, 2 Sam. 22. 33.* he enabled me so to walke, as to be capable of the accomplishment of his promises of defence against, and victory over ungodly men, and no wisdom, strength, or goodness of his owne. Thus let us humbly doe, when we feeble our hearts leap within us as rejoiced by the secret testimonie of con-

conscience, concerning the integritie of our carriage, in this or that matter of weight and triall that we were put upon ; Thou wast my wisdom, strength and power, O God, to guide and inable me to walke uprightly in such and such hazardous matters : my heart is deceitfull, and full of base feare, and if thou hadst not stood up as a mighty God in my weake spirit, I had been overborne with fleshly feares, and self-respects, to the wounding of my integritie, and thy Gospell and glory : blessed be thy name, that didst inable me to look over all by-ends, to thy glory ; and to acquit my selfe, at the time of triall, answerable to my upright purpose and resolution : 'tis of thee to will and to doe good, and unto thee I give all the glory. This is the good way to have God stand by us still, and so mightily to guide us in all our waies, that we shall keep faith and a good conscience to our grave, and so consequentially our joy, which is the life of our lives. This was upright *Jobs* sweet carriage, as we may ghesse by his language. *Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life.* If I were for holines as just men made perfect in glory, yet whilest a soule so holy, is in a body so diseated, I could not take any pleasure in my life. Thus to interpret these words, is to give us a hint and more, that *Job* was extremely overgone with impatience under Gods hand, which is the worst that can be said upon this place: I think there may be hinted this unto us (if the other be the maine scope) that *Job* saw all the integrity & uprightness he had, or possibly could be had, was from God,

and that he had no reason to boast and magnifie himself, what ever his endowments were.

Lastly, if you find by comfortable experience the truth of my doctrine, that the testimony of conscience concerning your sincerity, causeth joy and rejoycing in our souls, then hang upon God for perseverance in a sincere way, that your joy may abide, and still more and more increase, as the light of the Sun unto the perfect day. You have tasted of the sweetnesse of a sincere way, and therefore you should zealously follow God, to keep you on in it, as long as breath is in your nostrils, that you may never lose your grapes, your first-fruits of the Holy Land, your taste of Heaven, untill you come to the full fruition of it : 'Twas *Davids* prayer often(and let it be yours) though he were sincere, that *God would make his heart sound in his statutes.* There is much rottennesse in the best heart, and this will breake forth in a mans life, to the dishonour of God, and the wounding of his conscience, and robbing of his joy, if he be not still with *David,* hanging upon God by prayer, for more and more uprightness, and for further and further cleansing of an unsound heart. Things that are apt to bend and become crooked, we are every foot rectifying and straitning them, and labouring to strengthen them, so that they may abide strait, and so be still fit for use and service. You know to what to apply this, if I should not tell you, to the heart of man : Flatterie or violence will turne you aside from your sincere walking, if you doe not humbly seek God still with *David,* to
make

make your heart sound in his statutes and to be still with you, to uphold your steps in his paths. You will shipwracke Conscience, and all the peace and joy you have by it quickly, as *Peter* did, if you grow confident of your own strength, and doe not feare alwaies, and depend upon your God for abilitie, to doe every thing uprightly. And therefore leane not to your owne understanding, as *Solomon* said to his sonne, nor to any parts else you have, to steere your conversation, if you would maintaine the integritie and uprightnesse of it ; but renounce all in your selves, and beg God to make you run and not be wearie, and to deliver you from backsliding in heart and life, to make you faithfull to the death, and to give you at last the crowne of life.

This counsell that you may carefully follow, thinke on these two or three things. The peace and joy of a good Conscience, is better than the greatest preferment in the world, and the losse of it, is worse than the losse of thy life, in the cruellest way that man can invent. Thou wilt lose a little heaven, and create within thy heart a little hell, which will last till the marrow of thy bones be consumed, and thy moisture turned into the drought of summer, in the day that thou turnest aside from thy sincere course, and settest Conscience against thee. The joy of an acquitting Conscience, is unspeakable and full of glory : and so the sorrow of an accusing condemning Conscience, is unspeakable and full of terrour.

'Tis sorrow unspeakable strong. What God said to the woman, after she had turned aside

from the upright way of the Lord, that I may say of all the seed of the woman, when once they turne aside from their upright conversation. *Unto the woman God said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow, Gen. 3.16.* Sorrow multiplyed, is to have sorrow upon sorrow, as Paul useth the expression to the *Philippians*. As in child-bearing there is pang upon pang; and these returns of pangs, grow still stronger and stronger, till the womb be discharged of her burthen: so say I to you, in the day that you turn aside from upright walking, God will greatly multiply your sorrow; you shall have sorrow upon sorrow, pang upon pang, by an accusing Conscience; and these pangs shall still be stronger and stronger, till you have humbled your soules thoroughly for your halting, and got your Consciences sprinkled with the blood of Christ.

The sorrowes which God distributeth to his, when they turne aside from sincere walking they are sorrowes fetcht from hell, and these sorrowes of all sorrowes, are the strongest. *The sorrowes of hell compassed me*, saith the Psalmist. To turn aside from uprightness, and holiness, was the practice of the evill angels, for whom hell was first founded, and therefore God doth borrow some sorrowes from thence, to punish such sins in his children, which carry a near similitude to their sinne: that *similes vitio*, may be *similes supplicio*; like in sin, may be like in punishment. The sorrowes which God inflicteth upon revolvers, for similitude sake, are called the sorrowes of hell.

The sorrows of hell God distributeth in anger, as *Job* saith, *How oft is the candle of the wicked put*

out? and oft commeth their destruction upon them: God distributeth sorrowes in his anger, *Job. 5. 17.* So the sorrowes which God distributeth to his people, when they turne aside from their sincere walking, are from God, as with an angry frowning vizard upon his face, as if he were indeed very angry. as indeed he is with the sinne, though not with the person of the godly; for he hates sinne in all, with a perfect hatred. The sorrowes which God will distribute to thee by accusing Conscience, when thou haltest, shall be such as in which thou shalt see nothing, but the angry face of God; and this will make thee tremble and sorrow, as the Lord speaks of the Babylonians, *Jer. 51. 29.* as the very damned in hell doe, as one that feelerh the very sorrowes of hell to compasse thee. God looking angerly upon the earth, it trembleth, saith the Psalmist, *Psal. 104. 32.* The earth is the vastest and greatest body under heaven, and therefore least apt to shaking; and the foundations of it were laid by Gods owne immediate hand; and yet if God doe but looke angerly upon this firm stable body, so transcendently founded, it trembleth: how much more then needs must man, which is but a little dust of that grave vast body, shake and tremble, when God as an angry God looks upon him?

Secondly, the sorrows of hell are such as principally torture the spirit. The fire which wee make, can only burne and torture the bodies of men; because this only of man is materiall: immaterials, as the souls of men are, our fire cannot fasten upon; but that *strange fire*, which God

Ignis focalis immateriale non urit, inquit philosophus

hath kindled in hell, for all that disobey him, burns the souls of men, though immateriall substances. Nay, so strange is that fire, that it burns these immateriall substances most fiercely, as being the most sinfull part of man ; for 'tis only sin that pitches and defiles the soule, and makes it combustible, which otherwise would never burn, if all the fierie artists of hell did blow the bellows. Now, just such is that fire which Conscience kindles upon the breach of integritie ; to wit, a fire that principally tortures the spirit of man : a fire that burns inwardly, and consumes the marrow of the bones, and drinks up the spirits. The arrowes which Conscience shuts in upon a man, upon the breach of sinceritie, are such as pierce principally the spirit. As long as *Job* was patient under Gods hand, he felt the arrowes of the Almighty only without him, as I may say ; to wit, in his bodie, in his children and substance ; but when he brake out and cursed his day, he presently complaines, that hee felt the arrowes of God within him, and that the poison of them did drinke up his spirits, *Job 6.4.* All that which before he felt without, was nothing to that which he now felt within upon his spirit : As the torments which damned wretches shall suffer in their bodies, are nothing to those which shall continuallie flee up and down within their souls : So *David* after he had made breaches in his integritie, God filled his loires with loathsome diseales, but this was nothing to speake of ; God made things strike into his heart, and then he roared, *I am feeble and sore broken, I have roared by rea-*

son

Son of the [disquietnesse of my heart.] David felt pains gather about his heart, and then he cries out. The heart is the marke that God principally aimes at, when a Christian hath turned aside from his upright courle : other outward parts he may hit and deeply wound, but this is but to make holes into the heart, where the seat of unoundnes that principally offends him is. The fire which Conscience kindles, it may flash forth into the eyes, and tongue, and hands, and make a man looke fearefully, speake desperately, and doe bloudily, against the bodie; but the heat of the fire is principally within, in the furnace, in the spirit; 'tis but some sparkles and flashes only, that you see come forth at the lower hoies of the furnace, which you behold in the eyes, words, and deeds of such men.

Thirdly, the sorrowes of Hell are torturing, but yet not such as utterly consume and end the soule. The fire which we make, let it fasten on never so hard a thing, yet it will consume it in length of time. But that strange fire that God hath kindled in Hell for all that disobey him, though it burne with the greatest fiercenes that can be conceived, yet it never consumes the soules of those that are now burned in it; no nor yet the bodies that shall hereafter be burned in it. Damned soules are ever burning, and yet never burned; ever a consuming, and yet never consumed; and this addes infinitely to the miserie of the damned. Even such is that fire which conscience kindles in the soule of man, upon the breach of integritie. 'Tis a fire that will burne and torture the soule day and night, but ne-

ver

yet consume it. *Heman* complains that this fire
 burnt so fiercely in his soule, that it distracted his
 spirit, but yet did not end his spirit, *While I suffer
 thy terror I am distracted, Psa. 88. 15.* The terrors
 that conscience kindles in the spirit, will racke
 the spirit, rend and teare limbe from limbe, facul-
 tie from facultie, and make the spirit mad with
 horreur and anguish, but yet for all this not put a
 period to the spirit; he shall be as suspensive and
 as sensible of tortures to day as yesterday, and to
 morrow as to day, and next weeke as this weeke,
 next yeare as this yeare, the last day of his life, as
 the first day they begun, if God do not admi-
 rably intercept. Conscience hangs the soule in
 chaines alive upon the breach of integritie; and
 there lets the soule beate himselfe, and bite and
 gnaw himself, but yet cannot when he would end
 himselfe, and this makes every torture double. *O
 that I might have my request! and that God would
 grant me the thing that I long for! Why, what Job
 dost thou long for? why, even that it would please
 God to destroy me: that he would yet loose his hand
 and cut me off.* No *Job*, your spirit has hanged but
 a while, tis not dead yet, and therefore it shall not
 be cut downe. The things that *Jobs* soule refused
 to touch, were made by conscience his dayly sor-
 rowfull meat, and this Gall and Wormwood fret-
 ted his guts, but did not strangle and end him;
 conscience forc't him every day, and every night,
 to drinke a new drought that kept his spirit in
 continuall torture, and yet he could not get his
 soule out of his body, nor have it consumed in.
 The terrours that conscience kindles, they are so
 terrible,

terrible, that they will make a man wish for death, nay, inflict death upon himselfe, and all to put an end unto them, and yet all will not do, because these tortures fasten upon the spirit, but destroy not the spirit.

Finally, the sorrowes of Hell, they are such as are not in the least measure pittied by God. Though the damned in Hell be tormented with sulphurous flames, which is a very fierce fire; and though they cry and roare, howle, and yell, shrich, and gnash teeth continually, and all this in the hearing of God continually, which would stirre, nay, turne the bowels of any man, to heare but a moment; yet it stirres not God a jot, though he had heard those dolorous cries so many hundred yeares, to give them the least good word, or good looke. So that sorrow which conscience raises in the soule upon the breach of sincerity, God seems not to pittie in the least measure, for a long time. Though the spirit of man be rackt, tortured, and affrighted even unto distraction, yet God will not so much as afford a good looke to the Soule. Though he pray and fast, and consume himselfe with fasting, yet not any beame of light and love, that the revolting soule shall see in the countenance of God, to take hold on, and to comfort himselfe by. Hence tis that the Psalmist complains of God and his mercy as cleane gone; *Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? is his mercy cleane gone for ever? doth his promise faile for ever more? Psal. 77. 7, 8.* Nay, many times God serves backe-sliding Christians, as he served the Israelites of old, to wit, encreases their sorrow when

when they are in earnest suit for release and comfort; so far he is from pitying of them: and as *Joseph* carried himselfe to his Brethren; instead of pitying them in their want, he spake affrightingly to them, and told them that they were Spies, and so put them in feare of the losse of their lives. Just thus for a time doth God usually carry himselfe to revolting Christians: he is so far from pitying them, notwithstanding all their Prayers, that he calls them dogges, and speakes roughly to them, and puts them in feare of the losse of their best lives, and seemes resolved to proceed against them as his enemies, beg and cry as long as they will. *Job* points at this, where he saith, *Wherefore hidest thou thy face and holdest me for thine enemy? Job 13.24.* And is not this Hell indeed, to be in soule-misery, and to have no compassion from God? To be pittied and condoled by a mans friend, though he be not able to help him, we take it as a great mercy, and moderation of misery; *Job* would so have accounted it. But when such as we take for friends, do not only forbear to pity, but set themselves against us in our misery, and adde to our afflictions; this makes misery unspeakably miserable, and a lively Emblem of hell indeed: But I go no further this way.

Secondly, as the sorrow which conscience causeth upon the breach of sincerity, is unspeakably strong, no other in a manner but the torments of Hell; so tis oft-times unspeakably sudden. As the Wind raises hideous stormes and tempests at Sea on a sudden, that endanger the drowning of all; so Conscience, when once the soule hath turned
aside

aside to crooked waies, oft times of a sudden raises hideous storms and tempests in the soul, which addes exceedingly to the torture. Horrour and terrour breaking forth suddenly, affrights more by far, then if it came with warning. The fire that conscience kindles in the soule, is like the setting a fire of Gun-powder; very sudden, as tis very fierce. After once a breach is made upon sincerity, conscience laies traines of wild-fire and blows up all a mans joy on an instant, & sets on fire the soul, & then lets in legions of such spirits whose dwelling is only in fire, to keep garrison against all promises of good to this soule, and then the soule becoms like *Pashur*, fear round about: the face of God terrible; the face of friends terrible; the thought of sicknesse, death; and the thought of death, Hell; & the thought of hell, as at the door, and unavoidable. As the Arrows which God will shoot against the enemies of his Church, shall go forth as lightning, *Zec. 9. 14.* so the Arrows which God shoots by conscience, against such as turne aside to evill waies they go forth oft times as lightning, very sudden, and very swift. Sometimes when a sin like *Belshazzar* is in the very act of sinne, conscience writes down a mans doom in his heart, & in such legible Letters, that the sinner cannot choose but read and tremble. When a sinner is taking pleasure in unrighteousnesse, of a sudden conscience breaks forth into thundring and lightning in the soule, & the sinner is as one descending quick into hell. And [immediately, while he yet spake] the Cock crew, and the Lord looked backe upon Peter, saith the Text, *Luk. 22. 60.* On a sudden, while Peter was in

in the very act of denying, a Cock crew within, to wit, conscience that made *Peters* spirit die within him. Once and twice *Peter* denyed Christ, and Christ did not awaken conscience, and set him at him to pull him by the throat, but the third time, *immediately while he yet spake*, Conscience like a Lion ran upon his soule, and made him beleve that he would be a tormentor to him, as he is to the damned before their time. Sometimes conscience may let a man alone, after he is turned aside from sincere walking, but if the soule still go on, of a sudden Conscience will breake forth into thundring and lightning, so fiercely as he did in *Peters* soule, on whom if Christ had not looked backe, *Peter* would have gone neere to have served himselfe as *Judas*, after he had betrayed his Master.

To conclude all, This I am sure, O sincere soule, that as conscience will make thee know to thy comfort, that tis a sweet thing faithfully and sincerely to serve God; so conscience will make thee know to thy griefe, that it is an evill and a bitter thing to turne away from the good way of the Lord. Having therefore now set good and evill before thee, make a wise choice: Choose rather to undergo any thing, that man or devill can invent, that thou maiest still enjoy the peace and joy of a good conscience, then to have the greatest honor this world will afford, and shipwrack sincerity, and so lye liable to the lash of an evill conscience,

The

The fourth Sermon.

2 Cor. I. 12.

For our rejoycing is this, *the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards, but especially amongst you.*



THE fourth and last proposition, which now according to order and method comes to be handled, is this, *That there be speciall times and occasions, for the declaration of sincerity, which ought to be observed, and answerably to declare and shew our selves.*

The Church of the Corinthians was very vitious in doctrine and manners, as we may plainly see by many expressions of S Paul in his first and second Epistles to them. They were *a* contentious, and *b* puffed up one against another. They had itching eares, and carnally gloried in men; one was for *e* Paul, and another for *Apollo*, and another for *Cephas*: They were voluptuous, that before they came to the Lords Supper, one was hungry, another *d* drunken in the house of God: They were followers of heathenish fashions, as in their apparell and meats, so in their haire, wearing it so long that very *e* Nature and the Custome of the Church of Christ condemned it: They were *f* superstitious

a 1 Cor. 1.

11.

b 1 Cor.

4. 6.

c 1 Cor.

1. 12.

d 1 Cor.

11. 21.

e 1 Cor.

11. 14, 16.

f 1 Cor.

10. 25.

g 1 Cor. 10

14.

h 1 Cor. 6.

9, 10, 11.

i 1 Cor. 10.

9, 10.

k 2 Cor.

12. 20.

l 2 Cor.

4. 2.

m 2 Cor.

13. 10.

n 1 Cor.

5, 6.

1 Cor. 15.

34.

perstitious, g idolatrous, h adulterous, fornicators, abusers of themselves with mankind, theeves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners. marmurers, i tempters of Christ, k backbiters, whisperers, raisers of tumults, and what not? This grosse wickednesse made *Paul* to stirre up the grace of God in him, and to use great boldnesse of speech, towards this Church, as himselte saith, 2 Cor. 7. 4. with all plainnesse and powerfulnesse, reproving their sins, and making manifest the truth, to every mans / conscience, in the sight of God. They were growne so loose, that *Paul* was forc't to use such ~~m~~ sharp and home expressions, and with such Majesty, as you shall not find him the like, to any Church. Twice in one Epistle useth he this upbraiding expression, n *I speake this to your shame*, which not once throughout all his Epistles, to any other Church, doth he use the like upbraiding language. And then delivering his reproofs with such a transcendent Majesty. *Moreover I call God for a record upon my soule, that to spare you I came not as yet to Corinth*, 2 Cor. 1. 23. As if he would dart their soules through, with such an holy feare of God, that their loose hearts for ever after might stand in awe and sin not. Thus as this Church above all other, gave *S. Paul* speciall occasion for the declaration of his uprightnesse and sincerity, so answerably he courageously applyed himselte unto them, which is the meaning of this expression in my text, *but more abundantly to you-ward*, or, *specially among you*.

Paul had dealt sincerely with all other Churches, but other Churches were not so openly wicked, and

and therefore there needed not, that he should use such open majestical contestation with them. This Church of *Corinth* was very openly and wilfully wicked, and therefore *Paul* answerably opened his mouth against them. *O Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged: ye are not straitned in us, but ye are straightned in your own bowels.* 2 Cor. 6. 11. We have said enough and don enough (as if the Apostle had said) to worke upon your prophane hearts, and to turn you from your prophane lives, but yet your affections are straitned and clogged, that you come not off so readily, to follow our holy instructions as you should. The point you see is very naturally raised. *That there be speciall times and occasions, for the declaration of sincerity, which we ought to observe, and answerably to declare and shew our selves in our places.*

Speciall times and occasions for the declaration sinceritie, are either *personall, domesticall, sociall, or nationall*. Personall occasions, which require sinceritie after a special manner to be declared, are when a man is strongly assaulted by the world, the flesh or the devill, to sinne against God; or else strongly hindred in seeking the glory of God, and the good of his Church. When *Simon* the forcerer saw, that through laying on of the Apostles hands the holy Ghost was given, he offered *Peter* mony to impart his skill unto him, and so to have made him a merchant of the holy Ghost for gain; then was a speciall personall occasion from the world, for *Peter* to declare his sinceritie, that he abhorred all unjust waies to get wealth, and that he was not mercenarie in his Ministerie, as the world might

3.
Act 8. 18.
19, 20, 21.

suppose; which he wisely considered, and answerably carried himself. *Peter* stood up, and courageously said to *Sim.* the sorcerer, *Thy mony perish with thee; because that thou thoughtst the gift of God may be purchased with mony, thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickednes, and pray God if perhaps the thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven thee, for I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitternesse and bonds of iniquity.* When *Samuel* was thought hardly of the people being strongly set to have a King, as other Nations had, not liking their government by Judges; then was a speciall personall occasion from the world, for *Samuel* to declare his integrity that he had walked faithfully as Gods Vicegerent over them, & had given them no just occasion, to wax weary of this way of government, and so consequently that they did evill to desire a King. And *Samuel* said to all *Israel*, behold here I am, witnesse against me before the Lord, and before his annointed: *Whose Oxe have I taken? whose Assse have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hands have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith, and I will restore it you?* I Sam. 12. 3. When *Barjesus* withstood *Paul* in his ministry, that he could not doe that good he would upon *Sergius Paulus*, then was speciall personall occasion from the world for *Paul* to declare his sincerity, that he strongly abhorred flatterers and time-servers, and dearly loved the glory of God, and the winning of soules unto him; which he wisely considered, & answeratly with courage declared him -

himself. Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, & said, O full of all subtilty & all mischief, thou child of the Devill, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right waies of the Lord? Act. 13. 9, 10.

When Paul was strongly set upon by his own flesh, when the Law in his members rebelled against the Law of his minde, and carried him captive to the Law of sin; then was a speciall personall occasion from the flesh, for Paul to declare his sincerity, that he loved God more then his lusts, & to please him, rather then to enjoy the pleasures of sin, which hee wisely considered, and answerably declared himselfe. *But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away,* 1 Cor. 9. 27. This is after a speciall manner to declare sincerity indeed, when a man courageously fights against himselfe so farre forth as sinfull and opposite to God. The lusts of the heart, are the enemies of a mans own house, which are the worst enemies of all, and therefore when these begin to warre and rebell, against that holy light which is in our mind, then is a speciall time indeed for a man to stirre up the grace of God in him, and to declare his uprightnesse for God, whose throne the heart of man ought to be, or else God will give up the heart to the power and dominion of sin, and then the soul is undone for ever. This Paul wisely considered, and therefore when he felt this prick in the flesh after a speciall manner molest him, he still after a speciall manner declared his uprightnesse in wrestling against it,

2 Cor. 12.
7.

that so he might subdue his flesh, which otherwise would have subdued his spirit, and outed Christ of his prime Hold, and S. Paul of his prime happinesse.

When the Devill tempted Christ to cast down himselfe from the top of a steep place, and to fall downe and worship him, and so to decline his Father utterly; then was a speciall personall occasion from the Devill, for Christ to declare his uprightnes, that he prized every tittle of his fathers will above all this world, and all the honours and pleasures in it. Which Christ wisely considered, and answerably with much courage and resolution declared himselfe. *Then said Iesus unto him, get thee hence Satan: for it is written, that thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him onely shalt thou serve. Math. 4. 10.* So when the Serpent subtilly got into one of the followers of Christ, and praied him to pitie and spare himselfe, from that painfull worke on which the glory of God, and the salvation of man so much depended; then was a speciall personall occasion from the Devill, for Christ againe to declare his sincerity, that he more regarded the glory of God, and the good of man, then his owne life, though his life were worth a thousand of ours; which he thorowly considered, and answerably declared himselfe, *Get thee behind me Satan, Mat. 8. 33.* So when the Serpent subtilly set upon our first Parents, to draw them to eat of the forbidden fruit, then was a speciall personall occasion from the Devill, for them to have declared their uprightnesse; that they would not disobey their God in the least point, though

though they might have been made Gods themselves, to doe it: which because they did not seriously consider, and answerably carry themselves, they lost the confirmation of their happy being, and plunged themselves, and all us their posterity, into unspeakable misery.

Domesticall occasions, which require sincerity after a speciall manner to be declared, are, when in Family relations, good or evill, after a speciall manner is to be conversant about. when *Elys* Sonnes abused their high calling, by a prophane conversation; then was a speciall domesticall occasion for *Ely* to declare his sincerity to God and man, that he loved the glory of God above the lives of his Sonnes; which because he did not seriously observe and answerably carry himselfe, but passed over a speciall occasion, with an ordinarie reproofe, therefore God fell out with him, and punished him as one that esteemed and loved his Sonnes, more then God. When God commanded *Abraham* to sacrifice his onely Sonne *Isaac*, then was a speciall domesticall occasion for *Abraham* to declare his sincerity, That to obey the will of God, was dearer to him then the life of his onely Sonne; which he seriously considered, and answerably carried himselfe; and God then openly confessed *Abraham* to be upright. *For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy sonne, thine only son from me,* Gen. 22. 12. When *Iobs* wife bid *Iob* in his extremity to curse God and die, then was a speciall domesticall occasion for *Iob* to declare his sincerity that he served God for nought, which *Iob* seri-

ously considered, and answerably carried himselfe towards his wife. *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh; what? shall we receive good at the hands of God and not evil?* Job. 2. 10. So when *David*, *Sauls* sonne, had a speciall advantage against *Saul* and might have slaine him, but would not, because he was the Lords annointed; then was a speciall domesticall occasion for *David* to declare his uprightnesse to God and to *Saul*, that hee was an obedient son to *Saul*, and desired not the life or Kingdom of his father, but to live in love and peace with him; which *David* wisely considered, and took this speciall occasion to declare his integrity to *Saul*; and this done so seasonably, his words were to *Saul* like Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver, which made him to confesse *David* to be more righteous then himselfe, 1 Sam. 24. 17. So likewise when God met *Moses* in an Inne, and commanded him to circumcise his sonne, to which bloody ordinance *Zipporah* was so averse, or otherwise hee should lothe his life, then was a speciall domesticall occasion for *Moses* to declare his uprightnesse to God and to his wife, that hee regarded more to please God then to please his wife; which *Moses* seriously considered, and answerably with courage carried himselfe, or else he had assuredly smarted severely.

3.

Sociall or *Symmachicali* occasions and times, for the declaration of sincerity after a special manner, are when good or evil are more then ordinarily conversant about in relation to such or such a Society or Corporation. When *Joab* that bloody man, would have destroyed *Abel* that ancient

CITY.

City, because of *Sheba* a seditious man which fled thither, then was a speciall symmachicall occasion for that wise woman to declare her uprightness, for her own good, and for the good of that City whereof she was a member; that she was none of them that made strife and contention against *David*, nor that City in which she lived; which she wisely considered, and answerably with wisdom and courage carried her self. *I am one of them that are peaceable in Israel, thou seekest to destroy a City and a mother in Israel, why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the Lord, 2 Sam. 20. 19.* When *Judas* one of that Honourable Society, plotted mischief against Christ, the Master of that Company, then was a speciall time for Christ to declare his integrity, that the World might know that Christ had given *Judas* no just cause, thus treacherously to behave himselfe, but had every way so carried himselfe towards him, as might have been enough to have won any mans heart for ever to him. Christ made him as his equal, his familiar friend; he did eat of his bread, he had favors in common with the rest of the Apostles; and yet played the traitor to Christ: this, Christ upon this occasion (you know) declared. When the Holy-Ghost after a transcendent manner, fell upon the Apostles, that they spake with divers tongues, some sons of *Belial* mocked them and said, *These men are full of new wine*; then was a speciall symmachical occasion for *Peter* to declare his uprightness for the glory of God, and for the credit of that honorable Society of which he was: to declare to all the World, that they were not

drunken, as the blind worldlings conceived, but Transcendently filled with the Holy Ghost; which the Apostle seriously considered, and answerably with much courage he declared himselfe. *But Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and said, ye men of Iudea, and all that dwell at Ierusalem, be this knowne unto you, and hearken unto my words; for these are not drunken as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third houre of the day; but this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, &c. Act. 2. 14. 15, 16.*

Nationall occasions and times for the declaration of sincerity after a speciall manner, are when good or evill after a speciall manner is conversant about, in relation, not to this or that particular person, but to the whole Nation. When bloody *Pharaoh* would have destroyed all *Israel*, then was a speciall nationall occasion, for *Moses* and the rest of the Worthies of the Lord, to declare their sincerity, for the glory of God, and the good of his Church; which *Moses* seriously considered, and answerably with much courage carried himselfe towards *Pharaoh*, upon all occasions, though a King: he told him his owne, and held him strictly to Gods termes; and though he shuffled and shifted, and went forth and backe as a halting rotten Prince, to worke *Moses* about to decline a little from Gods will, yet so sincerely did *Moses* declare himselfe to God and all his people, that he would not yeeld to *Pharaoh* a hoofe, nor swerve from a little of what God bid him to stand for. So when *Balaam* would have cursed all *Israel* for wealth
and

and honour, then was a speciall nationall occasion, for all Israelites indeed, to declare their sincer-ity, by wrestling with the Lord by prayer, to countermine all his enchantments, which they seriously considered, and answerably with much unweariedness doubtlesse did, or else doubtlesse God would never have withstood *Balaam* in that admirable manner as he did, and have forced him still to blesse, when he meant to curse. when *Israel* committed whoredom with the daughters of *Moab*, and joyned them selves unto *Baal-Peor*, and the anger of the Lord kindled, threatned to destroy all, then was a speciall Nationall occasion for *Moses* to declare his sinceritie, that he loved the glory of God above the lives of his Brethren; which he seriously considered, and answerably with much courage did, *And Moses said unto the Judges of Israel, slay ye everyone his men, that were joyned to Baal-Peor, Num. 25. 5.* So when *Israel* had madethem a molten Calf in the absence of *Moses*, and God would have destroyed them all at once, and have made *Moses* a great Nation if he would have let him alone in his way, then was a specially national occasion indeed for *Moses* to declare his uprightness, that he loved the lives of his brethren above all honors and preferments this world could afford him, & that he loved the glory of God (which would have been much blemished by the Heathen, if he had destroyed *Israel*) more then his own life, which he seriously considered, and answerably declared himself. And *Moses* returned unto the Lord, and said, *Oh this people have committed a great sin, &c. Yet now if thou wilt for-*

forgive their sin, & if not, blot me I pray thee, out of thy book, Exod. 32. 31, 32. When Israel halted between God and Baal, making a mixture of divine worship & idolatrous together, 'one to colour the other, that poison might be swallowed without scrupling, to the speedy and unsensible perdition of souls; then was a special nationall occasion for the Prophets of the Lord to declare their uprightness, incrying against halting, not fearing man who shall be made as grasse; which *Elijah* seriously considered, and answerably with much courage carried himselfe. *And Elijah came unto all the people & said, how long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him: and the people answered him not a word.* When *Azariah* the Prophet told *Asa* and all *Juda*, that their halting in Gods worship was the cause of all their troubles, and that if they did zealously return to that purity of divine worship, which God required, and shake off mans inventions, it should go well with them, and that God would still be with them for good, and not for hurt, as he had been; then was a speciall national occasion for that people to declare their sincerity; their love to the purity of Gods ordinances, more then to their own inventions; which they seriously considered, and answerably with much zeal and life did. *And they entred into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers, with all their heart, with all their soule, that whosoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel should be put to death, whether smal or great, whether man or woman, 2 Chr. 15. 12, 13.* So when *Haman* had plotted the death of all the Jews, then was a speciall

speciall nationall occasion for *Mordecai* and *Esther* to declare their sincerity, for the glory of God and the good of his Church; which they seriously observed, and answerably with much courage carried themselves, *Then Esther bad them returne Mordecai this answer, Go gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three daies, night nor day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise, and so will I go in unto the King, which is not according to the Law, and if I perish I perish, Esther. 4. 15, 16.*

Thereason why God in the course of his providence, brings about speciall occasions for the declaration of sincerity, are these: First, that the world and the Devill may see, that his people are indeed sincere. Speciall occasions of triall, are like *Nebuchadnezzars* fiery furnace, heat seven times hotter then ordinary, which will thorowly discover gold from dross. These made known *Jobs* sincerity so universally, that all mouthes were stopt, which strangely thought and spoke of *Job* before. 'Tis very common with the Devill and his children, to account and call Gods people hypocrites; such as doe not serve God for nought, but follow Christ for loaves, and professe religion for their own ends. Now God to convince these censorious wretches, that judge amisse of the generation of the just, brings his children as it were upon the stage, in the open view of all, and puts them upon speciall trials of their uprightnesse; hee sets them such tasks of doing or suffering, that shall stretch every vein in their bodies, and convince all beholders, yea, the Devill and all his children, that they

they are since, and make them confesse with *Saul*, that they are more righteous then themselves. As there be some starres, which by divine institution are invisible to us, and others visible, to declare the glory of God, and to be of use for man : So those stars which God hath placed in the lesser world, to wit, the soul of man, some of them God would have to be as it were invisible to the world ; God would have a Christian, modestly, and humbly to conceal, as much as may be, many gifts ; but others againe God would they should declare them as much as may be, to his glory, and the good of others, as love, and sinceritie, that they may sparkle in the eyes of all the world, as glorious beams of the divine Image. Now man being too backward to this work voluntarily, God makes and fits occasions and times for the very purpose, that shall sift a man thoroughly, and sound his heart to the bottome, and turn his inside outward, and so declare his sinceritie or hypocrisie to all the world. As God knowes who are his, so he will have the Devill and his children to know also who are his; that they may walk as self-condemned wretches, as *Saul* did for persecuting of them. Now to effect this, this is the thing God does, viz. he makes bitter pills for his children to swallow, heavey burdens for his children to beare, such as no unsound heart would touch, with one of his fingers; he heats furnaces seven times hotter then ordinary, and throws his children into them ; one thing or other God so orders, that shall put his people to it, to see what mettall they be made of, that shall anato mize every string in their hearts, so that the

the Devill and all his children, to their conviction and torment, shall read sinceritie written in their hearts, with capitall letters.

The second reason why God in the course of his providence, brings about speciall occasions for the declaration of sinceritie, is, that his own glory may thereby be greatly advanced. Speciall cures, they winne a name to a Physitian, more then the ordinarie cures of seven years practice: likewise speciall victories, winne their prime agents more honour, then all the ordinary warfare of their whole life: So God by carrying his people through speciall occasions of trial, magnifies the glory of his power, wisdom, and love, more then a thousand ordinarie passages of his providence towards them. What a name for power, God wonne to himselfe, in the heart of *Daniel*, and the three children, for enabling them with such courage, to stop the mouthes of Lions, and to quench the violence of fire; to expose themselves to the mercie of Lions and fire, rather then to wrong their consciences. This doubtlesse made them more to sing of the power and goodnesse of the Lord, then all the passages of his providence towards them in the whole course of their lives before. Some skilfull Physitians will make their men swallow this or that strong poyson, that they may shew their skill before multitudes in curing of them, to winne them a name: So God he puts his people to great plunges oft-times, that he may winne them a name for ever in their hearts, and in the hearts of all beholders,

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for wisdom, power, and mercy in carrying them sweetly thorow all, without making shipwrack of faith and a good conscience. This know, that 'tis Gods great work in this world to advance his own Name, and to make it great to the ends of the Earth : now, amongst the many notable waies he hath to magnifie his Name, this is one, and not the meanest, to wit, to put his people upon speciall occasions, of the triall of their sincerity ; and by these, such an art hath God to advance his own honour, that hee wins a world of hearts to himselfe at once, that will bee so many living Trumpets to sound forth the praise of his greatnes and goodnesse, from generation to generation.

Thirdly, God by his providence brings about speciall occasions for the trial of sincerity, to adde to the torture of the Devil and his children. Great trials of the godly, put the Devill and his children in hope of their utter ruine. When *Haman* had prevailed so far, as to get a bloudy decree against the Jews, he then joyed exceedingly, as one that promised himselfe their utter ruine : now God stepping in between, and on a sudden turning this triall of *Mordecais* to his advantage, and to *Hamans* disadvantage ; to his honour, and *Hamans* disgrace, no man can tell, nor hardly conceive, how this added to *Hamans* torture. God hath admirable wayes, to make wicked men gnash their teeth, before they come to Hell ; and amongst the many admirable wayes which God hath for this end, this is not one of the meanest, to put the wicked into a kinde of hope, of having their will upon the godly, by giving the godly in part (for
trials

trials sake) into their hands, and then on a sudden, snatching them farther out of their power, then ever they were before, and making them engines of the downfall of the wicked. This hath made many a proud malicious wretch hang himselfe, stab himselfe, poyson himselfe, to wish himselfe any where, so hee were but out of the sight and talk of them that feare God.

Lastly, God in the course of his providence, brings about speciall occasions, for the triall and discovery of sincerity, that so the joy of the upright may bee augmented, in this life, and in the life to come. Speciall trials of sincerity, sincerely gone through, they procure joy unspeakable and full of glory in this life; and they work about joy unconceivable and full of glory in the life to come. There is joy in this life for the godly, and joy unspeakable and full of glory. So there is a reward in Heaven for the godly, and a great reward, as Christ useth the epithete, *Math. 5. 12*. Now, unspeakable joy God gives to them that undergoe unspeakable trials of their integrity; hee gives full flaggons of consolation to such as have been sorely shot at, as the expression is used concerning *Joseph, Gen. 49. 23*. and yet have kept faithfull to their God. So the great reward in Heaven, is kept for them that undergoe great trials on earth, and yet hold fast their integrity. As Princes have their waies to advance men to great honour, honourably; to wit, by putting them upon some notable, hard, and difficult service, and if they acquit themselves well and faithfully in it, then to confer great honour upon them, nor other wise:

wife: So the King of Kings he hath his honourable waies to advance mean Christians to great spirituall dignities, here and hereafter: and amongst manie others this is one, namely, to put them upon speciall trialls, and difficult taskes and services, that shall put every nerve and sinew to it; and discharging themselves well and faithfully in these, then he puts a *long white robe upon them, and palms in their hands*, great spirituall dignities, that so they may be knowne to all, to be such, *as came out of great tribulation*, as John saith, *Rev. 7. 14.*

This doctrine findeth fault with two sorts of persons, *viz.* such as of wilfulnesse, and such as of weaknesse, neglect and passe by speciall times and occasions, for the declaration of sinceritie.

Men wilfully passe by speciall times and occasions, for the declaration of sinceritie, when they shut their eyes, and will not take notice of such times, out of some self-respect. The Prophet *Isaiah* speaks of this sort of men, where he saith, *Let favour he shewed to the wicked, yet [will he not] learn righteousness in the Land of uprightness [wil he deal unjustly] [and will not] behold the Majesty of the Lord. Lord when thy hand is lifted up [they wil not see:] but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people, &c. Isa. 26. 10, 11.* God gave speciall times to this generation of men, to mend their maners, and to declare uprightnesse in their conversation to his glory; but though this speciall favour were shewed them, yet *would they not*, so much as set about to learne righteousnesse, to acquaint their deluded conscience with what was right, and to be practised by them, God in a very
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majesticall manner lifted up his hand against them to crosse and curse them in their corrupt wayes, and all to this end that they should behold it, and take shame to themselves, and break off from their unrighteous courses, and they wilfully shut their eyes, that they might not *behold the Majesty of God* against them. God gave them (of his rich favour) speciall times and opportunities to declare uprightnesse, and they made them speciall times and occasions to declare their pride and rottennesse. There is an iron sinew in the will of men naturally, and therefore let God give never so faire opportunities and occasions to them, to shew themselves for him and for his righteous wayes, yet they will not bow and stoop unto it. This iron sinew was in the neck of *Saul*, and therefore God called his sinne, in not slaying all the *Amalekites*, when he gave him a speciall opportunity thereunto, *stubbornnesse and rebellion*. God saw more into *Sauls* sinne then he, or many of us could imagine. He looked upon *Sauls* will in sparing *Agag*, when he might have killed him; and God saw, that *Sauls* will was resolutely set to do this, what every hypocritically plea he made for himselfe, and what expresse charge he had to the contrary. God gave to *Saul* there, a speciall opportunity wherein to declare his sincerity, and he as a self-willed wretch made it a speciall time wherein to declare his hypocrisie, to his utter disgrace and ruine both of soul and body.

Pride and malice are the cause, why men wilfully passe by speciall times, for the declaration of sincerity. God gave to *Herod* a speciall time

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wherein to declare sincerity, by causing that promised branch to spring out of the root of *Jesse* in his time, which root was thought to have been quite dead. Here was such an opportunity given *Herod*, to declare his love to Christ, by protecting and countenancing of him, as was given to no Ruler before him; and he out of pride and malice, as one that could not endure that there should be any other King of the Jews beside himselfe, sought with all his policy and might to kill him: so far was he from using all his regall power, to protect and fence this choice branch from spoilers. God gave likewise to the learned Scribes and Pharisees speciall occasions for the declaration of sincerity, by causing him that was the wisdom of God to converse among them, and to speak as never man spake, and to do these things which never man did; that so they (as *John* the Baptist, according to what they had heard with their ears, and seen with their eyes,) might magnifie him, and labour as Gods faithfull Ministers in their place, to bring all men believe on him, and follow him; and they out of pride and malice, used all their craft and might to crush him in the shell, to nip him in the very bud, to cloud his glorious sun, as soon as risen, that none might see his light and walk in it.

Such wretches as these, who wilfully shun speciall times and occasions for the declaration of sincerity, must be told this. That their sin is very great, and answerable shall be their punishment, unless they repent. That your sin is great appears by the example of *Saul* sinning in this very kind. God gave him a speciall occasion, to declare

clare his sincerity to him, when he gave all the *Amalekites* into his hands ; he wilfully taking his own course, and pleasing his owne humour, you know how God calls this sin, viz. *Stubbornesse, Rebellion* ; rebellion parallell to *Witchcraft, Rejecting the word of the Lord*. God will no otherwise account your sinne, who now wilfully passe by occasions and opportunities of declaring your sincerity to him. He will account your practice, *Stubbornesse* : and did ever any man flout it out with God, and prosper ? He will account your practice *Rebellion* : and did ever any man play the rebell against God, that he was not hanged and quartered ? He will account your practice a *rejecting of his Word* : and for this God will certainly reject you. You know well what heavie punishment God inflicted upon *Saul* for this sinne : he stript him of his Kingdome, nay, he stript him of the Holy Ghost, tenne thousand times more worth then his Kingdome, and gave him up to an evill spirit, to be vexed and whorried headlong into great sins, and great miseries ; and according to this proceeding of divine justice, must you look to be dealt withall. God offers you now golden opportunities, to declare your sincerity to him, by killing all *Amalakites*, every sin in your soules, which are more abominable to him, then ever was the *Amalakites* ; and to the killing of all, he promised you his assisting grace, as he caused his victorious arme to goe along with *Saul* : And if now you wilfully spare some one *Agag*, some fat of the Kine, some sinnes that bring you in pleasure & profit, look for

Pares peccato, supplicio pares

Est debilitas culpabilis, sicut excusabilis.

Ignorantia non est, ignorantia culpabilis est.

Sauls sauce to such sweet meats. God wil take his Spirit utterly from you, and give you up to your own hearts lusts, to commit wickednes with greedines to the aggravation of your condemnation.

Secondly, the doctrine in hand findes fault with such as passe by speciall occasions and times, for the declaration of sincerity out of weaknesse: under this head four sorts of persons are to be re-proved. First, such as through ignorance passe by speciall times and occasions, for the declaration of sincerity. Many men in place have often by the providence of God, speciall occasions and times put upon them, for the declaration of their sincere love to Christ and his Members, but being ignorant of what is indeed sincerity, to wit, what is indeed right, and the thing to be stood for, do nothing, shew themselves neuters, or else doe as the most doe. Some though they have a long time lived in the light, and should be able to distinguish between light and darknesse, yet through a carelesse improvement of the light, and resting in customes, know not what is indeed the exact will of God to be stood for; and therefore when they are by the providence of God, brought upon the stage, to set their seale to Gods truth, they as fools, say and do they know not what.

Others there are, who though not ignorant of what is indeed right and good, but yet ignorant of the danger which may ensue upon the neglect of any opportunity for the declaration of sincerity, passe by one speciall occasion, and promise to themselves another, and God peradventure presently proceeds against them in a strict way
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of judicature, to the deserting of their soules, and never brings about such a golden opportunitie more unto them, wherein to shew themselves to admirably for him. *Salomon* points at this where he saith, *Because to every purpose there is time and judgement: therefore the misery of man is great upon him, Eccif. 8.6.* The misery of man is great upon him indeed, that is, either ignorant of judgement (1) of what is right and sincere; or that is ignorant of time: that is, of such speciall and fit opportunities as God offers to man, for the performing of, and standing for, what is right and good. You that are ignorant of judgement, of what is right to be done or suffered, you will by the example of others be drawne to stand against right, in stead of standing for it, as did the ignorant multitude against Christ, concerning whom the *Apostle* speaks thus, *that had they known it they had not crucified the Lord of glory, 1 Cor. 2.8.* The ignorant Jewes not knowing judgement, were by the example of the learned Scribes and Pharisees drawn to stand against Christ, instead of standing for him, and so pulled the guilt of innocent blood upon them, w^{ch} is not yet washed off.

You that are ignorant of time; of the speciall occasions and times which God in the course of his providence brings about, for the declaration of sincerity, and of the dangers which ensue thereupon, must be told this, That you will open great gaps unto evill ere you are aware. Old *Ely* not taking that speciall occasion given him to declare his sincerity, by a due punishment upon his Sonnes, they grew horribly wicked,

and Gods wrath grew quickly unquenchable hot.

Secondly, let me tell you this, That you blinde-foldly passe by the choicest times of your life, to advance your own happinesse both here and hereafter. *Phinehas* for taking that speciall time which God gave him, to declare his sincere love to him, won a great deale of honour to himselfe and posterity. And so likewise *Levi*, who tooke hold of that speciall time that God gave him to declare his sincerity; *Who said to his Father and to his Mother, I have not seen him, neither did he acknowledge his Brethren; nor knew his owne children, Deut. 33 9.* won unspeakable honour. So likewise *Abraham* in taking that speciall time which God gave him, to try the sincerity of his love in putting on to sacrifice his only Son, won incomparable dignity.

Secondly, such as through carnall fear passe by speciall occasions for the declaration of sincerity, are here to be blamed. This I think was *Pilates* case: God gave a speciall time unto him, for the declaration of sincere love to Christ, when Christ was brought as a malefactor before him, and yet nothing worthy of death or of bonds could be found against him. But *Pilate* out of fear to displease the Jews, passed by this golden opportunity, and passed sentence upon the innocent. This was *Peters* weaknes: God gave him a speciall occasion for the declaration of sincere love to Christ, when the Damsel so hardly put him to it, and yet he out of feare, passed by this golden opportunity, and denied Christ with all vehemency, which he should with all boldnesse and favour then have confessed.

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Such as these may do well to keep these two Scriptures still in their minds: *I, even I am he that comforted you, who art thou that shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the sonne of man that shall be made as grasse? Isa. 51. 12. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven, Mat 10. 33.*

Secondly, such may do wel also to consider this, That they will brand their name with everlasting reproach; rob God of more honour, through their cowardinesse, then their souls are worth, though rated above all this world; and rob themselves of the Spirit of glory which rests transcendently upon suffering Christians, as *Peter* speaks, *1 Pet. 4. 14.*

Thirdly, such as passe by speciall times for the declaration of sincerity, through carnall perswasion are here, to be blamed. The man of God which cried against the Altar at *Bethel*, was faulty in this kinde: God gave to him a speciall occasion to declare his sincere love to him, when that old prophet perswaded him to do contrary to his commission; but he being overborn with the smooth language of the Prophet, returned back with him, and did eat bread and drink water, contrary to the expresse command of God. How the man of God was handled for this, such shall doe well to think of, that are apt to have an eare open to carnall counsel and perswasion, to be turned thereby from taking hold of speciall times for the declaration of sincerity. Three examples more there be, which are most worthy of these mens consideration, which would have this weakness cured in them. The first is the example of

Ioseph in his carriage to his Mistris; he would not admit discourse with her; nor stand to hearken to her unclean perswasions, but speedily breaks away from her company and counsell both. The second is, the example of *Paul* that would not consult with flesh and blood, when he was to take hold of speciall occasions and times, for the declaration of his sincere love to Christ. The third is the example of Christ himselfe, in his carriage to *Peter*, who when he sought to perswade him to spare himselfe, said, *Get thee behind me Satan.*

Fourthly, such as out of carnall pittie, passe by speciall occasions for the declaration of sincerity, are by this doctrine to be blamed. Good old *Ely* was faulty in this kinde. Out of pittie to his sons he forbore to doe that which he should have done, to have declared his sincere love to the glory of God. Let such as are faulty in this kinde thinke on *Elies* miterie to humble them; and on these divine examples following, to reforme them. Thinke on *Levie*, who sheathed his sword in the bowels of his brethren; nay, he knew not his father nor mother, no nor the children of his loines, that he might declare his sincere love to the glory of God, when opportunity was offered. Thinke on *Gideon*, who threw downe the Altar of his Father, that he might declare his sincere love to God, when he called him hereunto. Thinke on *Asas* dethroning his mother, and stamping her Idols to powder, 2 *Chron.* 15. 16. And on *Solomons* denying the request of his good mother *Bathsheba*, when she requested a bad thing, to wit, *Abisag* the Shunamite, for
Adonijah.

Adonijah, which was given to lie in *Dauids* bosome in his old age to keepe him warme and to cherish him. All these worthies were not swayed by foolish pitty; but looked over all relations, to obey the will of God, and to declare their sincere love to him, upon all occasions offered.

Wherefore, The second and last use of this Doctrine, shall be for exhortation. Seeing there be speciall times and occasions for the declaration of sincerity, and that many have broken through all impediments, to take hold of them, let us also strive thus to doe. Two things I would exhort you to, to observe such times; and secondly, to take fast hold of them. Seeing there be speciall times for the declaration of sincerity, let us give all diligence to observe, when they are by God offered to us. Shut not your eyes against such times; nor through ignorance and carelesnesse overlook such times.

But how should I know speciall times and occasions for the declaration of sincerity?

I answer, by these three things. First, by the dependency of Gods glory and thine own eternall good, upon times, occasions, and actions. If the glory of God, and thine owne eternall good depend much upon the doing or suffering of this or that thing; so depend, that if not performed, both Gods glory and thine own peace fall to the ground; this is a speciall time and occasion for the declaration of sincerity; and therefore observe it.

Secondly, by strong internall motions and movings to this or that duty, together with the hand of God externally in a speciall manner, by
mercies

mercies and corrections seconding. Tis said (you know) that the Spirit of the Lord moved *Sampson* at times in the Campe of *Dau*; That is, God after a speciall manner stirred him up now and then, to that great work of fighting with the *Philistims*, to which he had assigned him. So likewise now, the Spirit of God doth at times move mens hearts, after a powerfull & speciall manner, to this duty or that, to the mortification of this lust or that, and seconds this strong internall motion, by such mercies and corrections, as may most suitably tend, to further this motion, and spur on backward man to the performance of this duty. This is a special time for the declaration of sincerity; observe it. *Balaam* (doubtlesse) had speciall motions and internall stirrings not to goe about and curse *Israel*, and the Angel of the Lord without seconding to hinder him; and yet for all this sword within, and sword without, he would on. You that will do as he did, must look to fare as he did. So on the other hand, *Mordecai* (doubtlesse) had strong internall motions and stirrings to labour for the good of the Jews, and the downfall of proud *Haman*; & the providence of God externally, after a speciall manner seconding; which he observed, and answerably moved in this golden opportunity, and so wonne much honour to God, to himselfe, and good to his Church.

Thirdly, by the Word of God. The Word of God is so full and perfect, that it plainly sets before every man that studies it, what is of weight to be done, and what is of moment not to be done. It sets forth things to be done, or not to be done, with

with all the circumstances about them, which makes them of more speciall consequence, or lesse. So that if a man looke upon an action or occasion by the word of God, he shall presently be able to see, of what consequence the thing is, and how answerably he is to move in and about it, whether with more or lesse care and diligence. Hence tis that Christ willed those which he urged to imbrace him, to search the Scriptures concerning him; intimating that there they should see, of what consequence this work was, of imbracing Christ and following him.

Secondly, as I would have you to take notice, so I would have you to take hold of speciall times and occasions for the declaration of sincerity. When you have espied those golden opportunities, fasten upon them.

But how should I take hold of those golden opportunities aright?

Quest.

I answer, the taking hold of these golden opportunities aright, consists in these three things. *viz.* That a man when such times are brought about to him by the providence of God, set himselfe, first, speedily; and secondly, throughly, to answer them; and thirdly, that he go about all in the strength of Christ. First, a man that would take hold aright of speciall times and occasions for the declaration of sincerity, must be speedy in this work. Time, we say, tarries for no man. And opportunity is the extract and quintessence of time, and farre more gliding. Opportunity let slip, possibly a man may have never such another, though he should live an hundred yeares. Hence tis that
Christ

Christ speaks so dolefully to *Ierusalem*, which had slipt her opportunity, *O Ierusalē, Ierusalem, if thou hadst known in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace! but now they are hidden frō thine eyes.*

Secondly, as you must set your selves speedily, so you must set your selves throughly to this worke, if you would take hold of these golden opportunities aright. That is, you must set your selves to declare sincerity, answerable to the occasions and speciall opportunity which God offereth. For this is to take hold of these precious opportunities aright, to wit, when speciall occasions for the declaration of sincerity present themselves, after a speciall manner, to declare our sincerity in them. When a speciall occasion of this kind was offered to *Paul* by *Peters* judaizing, you know with what courage and spirit *Paul* declared himselfe answerable to the occasion. *To whom, I give place, not for a moment. Whom I withstood to the face. for he was to be blamed, Gall. 2.* And *Moses* likewise, though a very meek, quiet, and patient spirited man, yet when a speciall occasion for the declaration of his sincerity was offered, by *Aaron* and the peoples making a Calfe, with what a Lion-like courage did he shew himselfe? And old *Ely* because he did shew himselfe thus to declare his sincerity, when his sinnes oft provoked God, to wit, answerable to that speciall occasion offered, you know what construction God made of his milde cold carriage, in that urgent weighty matter, between God and his sonnes.

Thirdly, a man that would declare sincerity aright in all occasions offered thereunto, must set about

about this worke in the strength of Christ, and not in any strength of his owne. *I will goe in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only, Psal. 71. 16. I will goe in the strength of the Lord God, &c.* That is, in every designe, and in every businesse, I will depend wholly upon the aide and assistance of God, and upon no strength of my own. Thus we know *David* went against *Goliath*, when he would declare his sincere love to God, whom *Goliath* blasphemed. Thus must we doe when ever we set upon any opportunity, wherein to declare our sincere love to God, or else we shall do as *Peter*, deny Christ instead of standing for him answerably to the occasion offered.

Now, that what hath been said touching this point, of taking hold of golden opportunities offered, for the declaration of sincerity, you may all observe and follow, thinke on these two or three things. God calls for it: Conscience calls for it: Church and State calls for it; Soule and body will else severely smart for it. First, think on this, God calls for this at our hands, that we should declare sincerity according to the speciall occasions calling thereunto, *Gather your selves together, &c.* saith the Lord to the disobedient Jewes, and in them to us, before the decree come forth, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you. *Seek ye the Lord all ye meek of the earth, seek righteousness, seek meeknesse: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lords anger, Zeph. 2. 1, 2, 3.* A speciall time was offered, wherein to shew themselves for God and for good, & God called upon them carefully

fully to take it, as they tendred their temporall and eternall good.

God calls us now to the declaration of sincerity, as by his word, so by his workes, both of mercy and justice. God hath loaded us with mercies and corrections of all sorts, and all for this end, that we should declare our sincere love to him, answerable to all opportunities offered hereunto, *Many time (as the Psalmist saith) hath he turned away his anger, and hath not made a full end of us, when we have highly provoked him thereunto, and all for this end, that we should declare our sincere love to him, answerable to all opportunities offered thereunto. To the language of the Lord by the Prophet Amos I may fitly here allude. God hath withholden the raine from us, when there have been but three moneths to the harvest: God hath caused it to raine upon one Shire and County, and not upon another: God hath smitten us with Blasting and Mildew, and all this to bring us to declare a sincere love to him, according to all opportunities offered; and yet we are backward hereunto. God hath smitten us with the pestilence againe and againe; and with the Sword hath he threatned us againe and againe, and all this to bring us on to declare a sincere love to him, according to all occasions offered; and yet we are backward hereunto. Therefore thus will I do unto thee, saith the Lord to Israel, and because I will do thus, prepare to meet the Lord thy God O Israel, Amos 4.* So say I to you, forasmuch as all the milde meanes which God hath hitherto used are not effectuell for this end, to bring us to declare our sincere love

to him, according to all opportunities offered, therefore we must expect that God will take some severe course with us for the time to come; & because we are to expect this at the hands of God, let us prepare to meet the Lord our God. Let every one of us repent of our halting and time-serving past, and for the time to come let us set our selves to declare a sincere love to God, according to all occasions offered.

Conscience calls us hereunto, as well as God. Speciall occasions for the declaration of sincerity, now so frequently and so openly shew themselves, that every mans conscience tels him, that he should shew himselfe a great deale more then he doth, for God, his King, and Country. As in the night the Owles and the Bats look abroad: so in these dark sad daies of sin and wickednesse, the eyes of Owles and Bats, the eyes of wicked and secure sinners begin to open, and their consciences begin to tell them, that they should do something more now then they have done for God, and the good of his Church and kingdome.

Church and State calls for it. They both now with one dolefull voice cry out to us in the language of the Psalmist: *Who will rise up for me against the evill doers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity; Psa. 94. 16. They know not, neither will they understand, they walk on in darknesse: all the foundations of the earth are out of course. Psal. 82. 5.*

Finally, soule and body will else severely smart for it, if we doe not now step in, to take hold of all opportunities for the declaration of sincerity.

Curse

Curse ye Meroz (saith the Angel of the Lord) curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof: because they came not to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Jud. 5. 23. This curse may all such expect who now come not forth, to declare their sincere love to Christ and his truth upon all just occasions calling thereunto. The souls of such Christians as now neglect and put by those golden opportunities, of declaring their sincere love to Christ, will be given up to lukewarmnesse, coldnesse, deadnesse, hardnes, and some to obstinatnesse, and maliciousnesse against God and all goodnesse: which are all soule-curses with a witnesse. And such bodies as have in them such cursed soules as these, you may assure your selves, they shall meet with misery enough first or last. *Paul* intimates something to this purpose, where he saith, *At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge, 2 Tim. 4. 16.* Such as take not hold of speciall times, and occasions for the declaration of their sincere love to Christ and his truth, may fear that sad things will be first or last laid to their charge, such as shall make body and soule shake. Let us therefore all, as we love our bodies and soules, and as we professe love to Christ, which should be dearer to us then our bodies or souls, take hold of all opportunities for the declaration of sincerity. As God brings about speciall times and occasions for this end, so let everyone of us after a speciall manner take hold of them that we may after a speciall manner be honoured of God, both here and hereafter. *Dixi.*

Trin-uni Dei gloria.

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